

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**FIRST FARMERS & MERCHANTS BREAKS GROUND ON
NORTHSIDE BANKING CENTER**

COLUMBIA, Tenn. (November 10, 2008) – Forty-plus Maury County government, community and business leaders joined First Farmers & Merchants Bank representatives on Monday to formally break ground for the financial institution's new Northside Banking Center.

A larger, more comprehensive facility that will offer customers a wider variety of services and conveniences when it opens in 2009, the new Center is being built close by the current Northside branch on the former Jones Home Furnishings store site.

"This is an exciting time for us at F&M Bank as we observe the formal start of construction for what will be F&M's northern gateway into Columbia," said Randy Stevens, Chairman and CEO, First Farmers & Merchants Bank. "We see the Center's opening around the time of our 100th anniversary as an enthusiastic thank you to the citizens of the area for their support of us through the years. This is going to be a great bank for a great community!"

Other F&M executives – Tim Pettus, F&M Bank president, Harvey Church, Maury County president and head of the bank's private banking services and Patrick Klesel, who will manage the new Center – echoed Stevens' comments, emphasizing that the larger building will help the bank better meet the needs of the area with more services for Northside residents. It will be a symbol of security and strength, they said.

Both Maury County Mayor James L. Bailey and Columbia Mayor William E. Gentner offered their congratulations at the observance, also thanking the bank for their efforts in making the new branch a reality. In her position as vice president of the Maury Alliance, Janet Earwood offered the enthusiastic encouragement from the business community during the brief ceremony.

The 12,000 square foot center will consolidate both the walk-up and drive-through operations of the current Northside branch, which is located at the nearby Kroger, as well as pull together loan operations for both consumers and businesses in the area. It will offer expanded drive-through services, as well as expanded in-branch hours, including Saturday banking. The financial center will begin operations with a staff of ten banking professionals.

About First Farmers & Merchants Bank

Founded in 1909, First Farmers & Merchants Bank (Member FDIC) is one of the most successful independent banks in Tennessee, with total assets of more than \$875 million and deposits in excess of \$700 million. An additional \$2.6 billion in assets is held by its Trust & Financial Management Department. Headquartered in Columbia, Tenn., the bank operates 19 offices in a seven-county area that includes Lawrence, Maury, Marshall, Hickman, Dickson, Giles and Williamson counties. It is distinguished by its commitment to traditional, personal banking relationships that incorporate state-of-the-art technology to provide the highest possible level of service. For additional information, visit www.fandmbank.com or call the main office at 931.388.3145.

MEDIA CONTACT:

Frank Limpus C: 615.668.9938 E: frank.limpus@jathinking.com