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**MERIDIAN BANK, N.A., MARQUETTE FINANCIAL COMPANIES ACQUIRE
CONTRACTORS FINANCIAL SERVICES AND ESCROW FUNDING SERVICE**

*Marquette plans to fund growth of specialty real estate financial provider
focused on building affordable housing in Southwest U.S.*

MINNEAPOLIS – (Aug. 16, 2005) – Meridian Bank, N.A., a Phoenix-based subsidiary of Marquette Financial Companies, announced today that it has completed an acquisition of Contractors Financial Services (CFS), a specialty real estate finance company that provides construction financing for affordable homes in the Southwest. The acquisition also includes Escrow Funding Service (EFS), a subsidiary of CFS that handles disbursement of construction proceeds for CFS and other third parties. Both companies are based in Redland, Calif.

The deal closed on Aug. 1, 2005. Terms were not disclosed.

Founded in 1997, CFS provides short-term construction loans to build or refurbish affordable single-family homes. The company provides loans to builders and borrowers who may not qualify for conventional bank financing. To date, CFS has financed the production of 2,100 homes valued in excess of \$350 million – with a foreclosure rate of less than one percent. Most of the homes to date have been built in San Bernardino and Riverside Counties; Marquette said it will invest capital to allow the business to expand into new markets.

The acquisition of CFS and EFS leverages both Meridian Bank and Marquette’s existing real estate financing expertise, while expanding the firms’ presence in the Southwest, where Meridian Bank is based.

CFS is the second company Marquette has acquired in the residential real estate development and construction finance market, but the first to focus on affordable housing. Minneapolis-based Builders Mortgage Company LLC provides single and multiple family residential construction loans to residential contractors and developers in Minnesota, western Wisconsin and Florida. Additionally, Meridian Bank has a real estate construction and development lending division in Phoenix.

“CFS and EFS are a great fit for our company, our business strategy and our values,” said Bert Colianni, Marquette’s chief operating officer. “They are staffed by people who have a passion for what they do: helping average-income families obtain a home of their own; supporting small independent builders and contractors with the financing they need; and enhancing the communities where they operate.”

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“We are pleased to have new ownership that not only has complementary expertise and holds similar values, but also provides needed capital to help us grow into new markets and serve more families,” said Dale Ellis, CFS chief executive officer and founder.

Ellis will report to Doug Hile, chief executive officer of Meridian Bank. In connection with the sale, long-term CFS employee Sue Bookman will be named president. All employees, as well as the existing management, including Bookman and Laurie Delgado, head of EFS, will remain in place.

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About Meridian Bank, N.A.

Meridian Bank, N.A., focuses on providing highly responsive financial services to business owners and real estate developers as well as investors, executives, professionals and local community clients. Meridian Bank has expanded to nine offices in and around the Phoenix area. The bank has total assets of \$695 million with gross loans of \$455 million and total deposits of \$520 million.

About Marquette Financial Companies

Marquette Financial Companies is a privately held financial services company with a portfolio of operating companies focused on providing financial services to businesses and their owners. With assets totaling \$1.3 billion and capital resources in excess of \$370 million, Marquette operates in 32 states with more than 665 employees. Marquette is part of the Pohlads family holdings, which also include significant interests in the beverage, entertainment and real estate industries, as well as the ownership of the Minnesota Twins Major League Baseball team. For more information, visit www.marquette.com.