



PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:

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WINTER PARK PLAYHOUSE EXPANDS WITH HELP FROM CITY'S MICRO LOAN PROGRAM

WINTER PARK, Fla., an internationally recognized ICMA Excellence Award winner (May 26, 2009) – The Winter Park Playhouse is the first recipient of funds from the City of Winter Park's Micro Loan Program offered through BankFIRST's Socially Responsible Banking Program. As the city's only professional theater, The Winter Park Playhouse has long offered numerous productions that add to the culture, vibrancy and charm of the city. The playhouse plans to use the micro loan funding to assist in renovations to double the size of their current seating capacity and upgrade the cultural venue.

The City of Winter Park and BankFIRST established the Micro Loan Program to allow small and start-up businesses within the Community Redevelopment Agency (CRA) of Winter Park to access loan amounts that were traditionally smaller than normal lending parameters of most banking institutions. BankFIRST, a longtime partner with the city and involved community partner, agreed to operate and administer the portfolio of loans approved under the program. The program offers loans at prime plus one percent, with a minimum rate of six percent, with 3 to 5-year terms for amounts ranging from \$5,000 to \$40,000.

BankFIRST's Socially Responsible Banking Program (SRB) is a community focused program addressing the critical social concerns facing the greater Winter Park area. The SRB is comprised of a deposit account that offers a high rate of interest for participating individuals and institutions. These deposits are then directly invested into three socially sensitive loan categories with special rates and terms: Affordable Housing, Community Building (education, non-profit support, faith-based initiatives, conservation and the environment), and Business and Economic Development.

Loans under the Micro Loan Program will be offered to new or existing businesses. Prior to consideration, new businesses are required to obtain technical assistance from organizations such as the National Entrepreneur Center, Black Business Investment Fund, African American Chamber and SCORE, a nonprofit association dedicated to entrepreneur education and the formation, growth and success of small businesses nationwide. One of the main goals of the program is to achieve 10 percent minority participation. All closing costs are covered under the city's agreement with BankFIRST.

Small and start-up businesses within the CRA area of Winter Park are encouraged to apply for the Micro Loan Program by calling 407-599-3567. For more info regarding BankFIRST and their Socially Responsible Banking Program, please call 321-278-2110. For additional information regarding the City of Winter Park, please visit the city's official Web site at www.cityofwinterpark.org.

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