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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Washington, D.C. (September 6, 2007)— **BANKWEST**, a member of the Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA), which represents 5,000 community banks nationwide, said today that community banks remain a stable source of mortgage and small business loans even as the national mortgage market is being buffeted by talk of a credit crunch.

“Despite talk of a credit crunch, the truth is community banks are open for business,” said **Randy Whitcomb, BANKWEST Loan Officer**. “Community banking is a relationship-oriented business. **BANKWEST** is here for our community to not only help families get a mortgage loan, but help them get a mortgage loan they can afford for the long-term. We won’t put a family in a home they can’t afford to keep.”

“Wall Street may be suffering but Main Street’s community banks are in solid shape and open for business,” said Camden Fine, ICBA president and CEO. “Community banks are the foundation of our nation’s diversified financial system. A credit crunch like we’re seeing now is exactly why the nation needs the community banking industry – to ensure that credit remains consistently and widely available in good times and bad. Today, consumers and communities can continue to rely on community banks for their financial needs.”

Fine added that the community banking business is weathering this latest crisis in the mortgage market because community banks are well run, highly capitalized and among the most highly regulated financial institutions in the country.

Notably, community banks provide a stable and reliable source of mortgage money, whether they sell mortgage loans into the secondary market or hold them on their own books. ICBA reports that nearly 90 percent of mortgages made through community banks that do business with ICBA Mortgage, an ICBA subsidiary, are owner-occupied homes. They also have a delinquency rate that is below the national rate for one-to-four-unit residential properties, an indication of the conservative financial principles community banks hold.

About ICBA

The Independent Community Bankers of America, the nation’s voice for community banks, represents 5,000 community banks of all sizes and charter types throughout the United States and is dedicated exclusively to representing the interests of the community banking industry and the communities and customers we serve. For more information, visit www.icba.org.