



*News Release*

*For more information contact:*  
Dennis J. Zember Jr.  
Executive Vice President & CFO  
(229) 890-1111

**AMERIS BANCORP REPORTS NET INCOME  
AND DECLINE IN NON-PERFORMING ASSETS FOR FIRST QUARTER 2011**

**April 26, 2011**

**AMERIS BANCORP (NASDAQ-GS: ABCB), Moultrie, Georgia**, today reported net income available to common shareholders of \$580,000, or \$0.02 per diluted share, for the quarter ended March 31, 2011, compared to a net loss of \$2.3 million, or (\$0.17) per diluted share, for the quarter ended March 31, 2010. Highlights of the results of the first quarter of 2011 include:

- The first quarter of 2011 represented the 2nd consecutive quarter of profitability for the Company.
- Non-accrual loans declined 24% from March 31, 2010 and 14% from December 31, 2010.
- Tangible common equity as a percentage of total assets improved to 7.51% during the quarter.
- The Company's net interest margin improved to 4.04%, despite historically low levels of earning assets to total assets and higher concentrations of short-term assets.
- Allowance for loan losses as a percentage of non-performing loans increased to 52% in the current quarter compared to 37% at March 31, 2010.
- Annualized net charge-offs for the current quarter declined to 1.88% of total loans compared to 3.33% for the year ended December 31, 2010.

"We are proud to report net income and a reduction in non-performing assets during the first quarter of 2011. Our financial results represent a significant improvement from prior quarters due to the success of several strategies we implemented throughout this economic cycle. We believe the benefits of these decisions will continue to positively impact earnings as we move forward in the national recovery," stated Edwin W. Hortman, Jr., President and CEO.

***Continued Improvement in Credit Quality***

Non-performing assets declined for the second consecutive quarter as the Company continued to see success in the resolution of problem assets and a slowing of problem asset formation. Total non-accrual loans declined 13.7% to \$68.4 million at March 31, 2011 compared to \$79.3 million at December 31, 2010 and \$96.1 million at the peak of this economic cycle. The Company's balances in OREO (other real estate owned) increased to \$62.3 million at March 31, 2011 from \$57.9 million at December 31, 2010, as problem loans migrated to OREO for final liquidation. Mr. Hortman commented on credit quality, saying "Although we continue to see improvements in the resolution of our problem assets, we remain cautiously optimistic about improving market conditions. Our entire Ameris team continues to work diligently to reduce the problem assets on our balance sheet with the same sense of urgency as when this economic downturn began."

Net charge-offs on loans during the first quarter of 2011 decreased to \$6.2 million as compared to \$10.2 million during the fourth quarter of 2010 and \$13.0 million during the first quarter of 2010. The Company's provision for loan losses during the first quarter of 2011 amounted to \$7.1 million, a decline of \$4.3 million as compared to the \$11.4 million posted in the fourth quarter of 2010. At March 31, 2011, the Company's loan loss allowance totaled \$35.4 million, or 2.63%, of ending legacy loans, compared to \$34.6 million, or 2.52%, at the end of 2010.

### ***Balance Sheet Trends***

Total assets at March 31, 2011 were \$2.92 billion, an increase of 24.3% as compared to March 31, 2010. This year-over-year increase is primarily due to the four FDIC-assisted transactions completed by the Company during 2010. However, as compared to balances at December 31, 2010, total assets decreased \$53.7 million, or 7.3% on an annualized basis.

Total loans outstanding decreased \$57.8 million during the first quarter of 2011 to \$1.87 billion at March 31, 2011 from \$1.93 billion at December 31, 2010. Loans acquired in FDIC-assisted transactions decreased by \$29.0 million, and the Company's legacy loan portfolio declined \$28.8 million, as the Company continued to resolve problem assets through upgrades, charge-offs or foreclosure.

Total deposits grew \$37.3 million, or 6.0% on an annualized basis, during the first quarter of 2011, from \$2.54 billion at December 31, 2010 to \$2.57 billion at March 31, 2011. Noninterest-bearing deposits increased \$14.1 million, or 18.9% on an annualized basis, and interest-bearing deposits increased \$23.2 million, or 4.2% on an annualized basis.

### ***Improvement in Net Interest Income and Net Interest Margin***

Net interest income during the first quarter of 2011 totaled \$24.2 million, an increase of \$3.8 million, or 18.6%, compared to the \$20.4 million reported for first quarter of 2010 and an increase of \$1.2 million, or 5.2%, compared to the \$23.0 million reported for the fourth quarter of 2010. The Company's net interest margin increased to 4.04%, compared to 3.92% during the same quarter of 2010 and 3.88% during the fourth quarter of 2010, due to an improvement in cost of funds. The yield on earning assets in the first quarter of 2011 was 5.35% compared to 5.36% in the first quarter of 2010 and 5.18% in the fourth quarter of 2010. The Company's cost of funding saw a greater improvement, as it decreased from 1.41% in the first quarter of 2010 and 1.27% in the fourth quarter of 2010 to 1.22% in the first quarter of 2011.

At March 31, 2011, the Company's earning assets totaled \$2.4 billion, or 83.7% of total assets, compared to \$2.1 billion, or 89.7% of total assets, at the same time in 2010. This decrease is attributable to the growth in non-earning assets associated with the FDIC-assisted transactions, such as covered loans, OREO, and the FDIC indemnification asset of \$167.2 million at March 31, 2011. As these assets are resolved and liquidated, the proceeds are expected to be reinvested in earning assets.

### ***Non-Interest Income and Expense***

Total non-interest income for the first quarter of 2011 increased 26.8% to \$6.2 million, from \$4.9 million reported in the first quarter of 2010. Service charges on deposit accounts increased \$828,000, or 24.1%, from the first quarter of 2010 due to the increased number of customer accounts. Income from mortgage related activities declined from \$554,000 in the first quarter of 2010 to \$450,000 in the first quarter of 2011. Other non-interest income increased due to a gain on the sale of a former branch building, increased check order fees and a higher level of merchant fee income.

Non-interest expenses increased from \$16.9 million in the first quarter of 2010 to \$21.2 million in the first quarter of 2011. Salaries and employee benefits reflect the largest increase; however, this increase is in proportion to the Company's asset growth. Total assets per full-time-equivalent employee increased from \$4.0 million at March 31, 2010 to \$4.2 million per employee at March 31, 2011. The Company believes the earnings potential to be significant as additional improvement is expected with the consolidation of Darby Bank & Trust Co. into the core Ameris Bank operations during the second quarter of 2011. The increase in occupancy and equipment expenses, as well as data processing and telecommunication expenses, is directly correlated to the increase in the number of branch locations from the first quarter of 2010 to the first quarter of 2011. Credit related expenses decreased as the Company reported a net gain of \$700,000 on the sale of OREO in the first quarter of 2011, compared to a net loss of \$487,000 in the first quarter of 2010 and a net loss of \$2.0 million in the fourth quarter of 2010. Problem loan and OREO expense totaled \$2.5 million for the three months ended March 31, 2011, compared to \$2.9 million for the three months ended December 31, 2010, and \$1.5 million for the three months ended March 31, 2010.

Ameris Bancorp is headquartered in Moultrie, Georgia, and at the end of the most recent quarter had 59 locations in Georgia, Alabama, northern Florida and South Carolina.

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*This news release contains certain performance measures determined by methods other than in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America ("GAAP"). Management of Ameris Bancorp (the "Company") uses these non-GAAP measures in its analysis of the Company's performance. These measures are useful when evaluating the underlying performance and efficiency of the Company's operations and balance sheet. The Company's management believes that these non-GAAP measures provide a greater understanding of ongoing operations, enhance comparability of results with prior periods and demonstrate the effects of significant gains and charges in the current period. The Company's management believes that investors may use these non-GAAP financial measures to evaluate the Company's financial performance without the impact of unusual items that may obscure trends in the Company's underlying performance. These disclosures should not be viewed as a substitute for financial measures determined in accordance with GAAP, nor are they necessarily comparable to non-GAAP performance measures that may be presented by other companies.*

*This news release contains statements that constitute "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended. The words "believe", "estimate", "expect", "intend", "anticipate" and similar expressions and variations thereof identify certain of such forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the dates which they were made. The Company undertakes no obligation to publicly update or revise any forward-looking statements, whether as a result of new information, future events or otherwise. Readers are cautioned that any such forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance and involve risks and uncertainties and that actual results may differ materially from those indicated in the forward-looking statements as a result of various factors. Readers are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements and are referred to the Company's periodic filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission for a summary of certain factors that may impact the Company's results of operations and financial condition.*