NEWS RELEASE

Southside Bancshares, Inc. Completes the Merger of Fort Worth National Bank Into Southside Bank

9/29/2008

TYLER, Texas, Sept. 29 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Southside Bancshares, Inc. (Nasdaq: SBSI) announced the merger of the locations of Fort Worth National Bank into Southside Bank, effective September 29, 2008.

"It is our pleasure to welcome Fort Worth National Bank customers to the Southside Bank family," stated B. G. Hartley, Southside Bancshares, Inc. Chairman and CEO. "We are excited about expanding the Southside name and franchise in the growing and dynamic Tarrant and Travis County markets. Now that we have completed the merger process, we will be able to provide Fort Worth, Arlington and Austin customers with the full range of financial services and expanded resources Southside Bank offers. Other than the name change, our newest Southside Bank customers should not notice any changes. The same friendly officers and associates that have helped you with your banking needs for years will continue to greet you and help you with your banking needs in the future."

Southside Bancshares, Inc. is a bank holding company with approximately $2.3 billion in assets that owns 100% of Southside Bank. Southside Bank currently has 44 banking centers in Texas and operates a network of 47 ATMs.

To learn more about Southside Bancshares, Inc., please visit our investor relations website at **http://www.southside.com/investor**. Our investor relations site provides a detailed overview of our activities, financial information and historical stock price data. To receive e-mail notification of company news, events and stock activity, please register on the E-mail Notification portion of the website. Questions or comments may be directed to Susan Hill at (903) 531-7220, or **susan.hill@southside.com**.

Forward-Looking Statements

Certain statements of other than historical fact that are contained in this document and in written material, press releases and oral statements issued by or on behalf of the Company, a bank holding company, may be considered to be "forward-looking statements" within the meaning of and subject to the protections of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. These forward-looking statements are not guarantees of future performance, nor should they be relied upon as representing management's views as of any subsequent date. These statements may include words such as "expect," "estimate," "project," "anticipate," "appear," "believe," "could," "should," "may," "intend," "probability," "risk," "target," "objective," "plans," "potential," and similar expressions. Forward-looking statements are statements with respect to the Company's beliefs, plans, expectations, objectives, goals, anticipations, assumptions, estimates, intentions and future performance and are subject to significant known and unknown risks and uncertainties, which could cause the Company's actual results to differ materially from the results discussed in the forward-looking statements. For example, discussions of the effect of the Company's expansion, including expectations of the costs and profitability of such expansion, trends in asset quality and earnings from growth, and certain market risk disclosures are based upon information presently available to management and are dependent on choices about key model characteristics and assumptions and are subject to various limitations. By their nature, certain of the market risk disclosures are only estimates and could be materially different from what actually occurs in the future. As a result, actual income gains and losses could materially differ from those that have been estimated.

Additional information concerning the Company and its business, including additional factors that could materially affect the Company's financial results, is included in the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2007 under "Forward-Looking Information" and Item 1A. "Risk Factors," and in the Company's other filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. The Company disclaims any obligation to update any factors or to announce publicly the result of revisions to any of the forward-looking statements included herein to reflect future events or developments.

SOURCE Southside Bancshares, Inc.

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