

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Story Financial Partners Announces Expansion into Huntsville Market with Strategic Leadership Appointments

Jackson, Mississippi (August 4, 2025) — Curt Gabardi, President and CEO of Story Financial Partners, announced the Bank is entering the Huntsville, Alabama market. To lead this strategic initiative, the Bank has hired Chris Allen as Huntsville Market President and Steve Thrasher as Huntsville Mortgage President. Principally headquartered in Jackson, Mississippi, the new Huntsville office marks the second location outside its home state, as the Bank also maintains a bank office in Memphis, Tennessee.

The move to Huntsville represents Story Financial Partners' commitment to serving the financial needs of the growing North Alabama region, while continuing to deliver exceptional, relationship-driven banking solutions.

"Huntsville represents an exciting component of our growth strategy. Attracting such highly respected leadership to optimize our Bank's talent-driven growth strategy, as we have with Chris and Steve, reflects a significant achievement for our Bank. As we formally enter the Huntsville market, we know that nothing is more important to our growth than bringing together talented leadership at every level, all of whom aspire to provide exceptional client experience. This is the essence of our Bank's story," Mr. Gabardi explained.

Chris Allen will lead the Bank's overall general banking efforts in the Huntsville market. A third-generation resident of Huntsville with over twelve years of experience in the Alabama banking industry, he has a strong record of building trusted relationships with banking clients. Mr. Allen was most recently the Market President of Southern States Bank in Huntsville.

“Huntsville is a dynamic, innovative community,” said Chris Allen. “I’m thrilled to help Story Financial Partners become a deeply entrenched banking partner in the Huntsville community by offering personalized solutions and local decision-making.”

“Our expansion into Alabama is an important step in serving Huntsville with the relationship-focused approach our clients expect,” said Brian Rippee, Chief Banking Officer at Story Financial Partners. “We’re proud to welcome such talented and seasoned bankers to lead our efforts in this market.”

Steve Thrasher will oversee the Bank’s mortgage strategy focusing on growth in Huntsville and throughout Alabama. A seasoned mortgage executive with over thirty years in residential mortgage lending, Mr. Thrasher brings deep expertise in building strong mortgage teams that deliver exceptional client experience.

“I’m excited to join Story Financial Partners and lead a team of skilled mortgage bankers in this market,” Mr. Thrasher said. “The Huntsville area has an enormous opportunity for mortgage lending and our team understands the importance of making the home-buying process a smooth and efficient experience for our clients. We look forward to making the mortgage team a critical component in the success of Story Financial Partners in Alabama.”

Freddie Rowell, the Bank’s Chief Mortgage Banking Officer stated, “We are excited to expand our mortgage banking services into the dynamic and growing Huntsville market. Adding Steve Thrasher to our team underscores our commitment to delivering exceptional local expertise and personalized service to our clients. This expansion reflects our belief in building strong relationships and supporting the communities we serve at every step of the homeownership journey.”

Story Financial Partners plans to open an office at 4205 Balmoral Drive, located at the epicenter of the business and medical district, along the Memorial Parkway & I-565 corridor.

About Chris Allen, Huntsville Market President

Mr. Allen began his banking career after he received his B.S. in Purchasing, Procurement/Acquisitions and Contract Management from Athens State University. Following two years in retail banking with Redstone Federal Credit Union, Mr. Allen began working in commercial banking. In 2020, Mr. Allen moved to Regions Bank as a Senior Vice President in Commercial Banking and spent the next four years expanding their commercial banking presence in the Huntsville market. His commercial banking

experience led him to become Market President for Southern States Bank in 2024, where he managed a large portfolio of commercial clients and focused on market expansion.

Mr. Allen is an active member of the Board of Directors of the Boys and Girls Club of North Alabama, a member of the Committee of 100, Rotary Club of Huntsville, Athens State University Foundation Board, Huntsville Hospital Foundation Classic Committee, and was recognized as a Business Alabama Rising Star of Banking in 2024.

Mr. Allen and his wife, Samantha, live in Huntsville with their three children, Willa, Alice Anne, and Sanders.

About Steve Thrasher, Huntsville Mortgage President

Mr. Thrasher has been in the mortgage industry in Huntsville, Alabama for over thirty-eight years. Throughout his career, he has built a reputation for fostering strong client relationships. In January of 2000, Mr. Thrasher began managing the mortgage origination group of northern Alabama and southern Tennessee for Union Planters Bank. Most recently, Mr. Thrasher served as the Vice President of Avadian Credit Union, where he managed the real estate department for Alabama, including the construction lending team.

Mr. Thrasher has served as a Shriner at the local Cahaba Shine for thirty years and has previously served as Vice President on the Board of the Southeastern Credit Union Real Estate Network.

A lifelong resident of Northeast Alabama, Mr. Thrasher has spent most of his career serving Madison County and its surrounding areas. He and his wife, Marlene, reside on Green Mountain in Huntsville, and they have three children and five grandchildren.

Commitment to the Community

Story Financial Partners believes that strong communities are built on strong relationships. The Bank's expansion into Huntsville reflects its mission to deliver big-bank capabilities with local-bank service. Story Financial Partners is deeply committed to investing in the success of the communities it serves. As the Bank grows, it remains focused on building trusted, lasting partnerships with local businesses, families, and civic organizations. This commitment means understanding the unique needs of the community, supporting local economic development, and championing initiatives that make Huntsville an even better place to live and work.

President and Chief Operating Officer, Pam Gordon said, “through personalized service, local decision-making, and active involvement in community events and causes, Story Financial Partners strives to be more than just a bank—it aims to be a true financial partner and neighbor. The Bank believes that by empowering people and businesses with the right resources, guidance, and support, it can help strengthen the community.”

About Story Financial Partners

Story Financial Partners, which recently changed its name from First Commercial Bank, a \$915 million asset financial institution headquartered in Jackson, Mississippi, and owned by the privately held holding company, First Commercial Bancshares, Inc., is Mississippi’s first and foremost bank for businesses and professionals, having pioneered this uniquely focused banking model in the state. First Commercial Bank opened its doors on October 12, 2000.

As the Bank celebrates its 25th Anniversary in 2025 as a dedicated financial partner, the Bank is continuing its strong legacy in providing exceptional service to its clients and communities they proudly serve.

Story Financial Partners is a unique story, inspired by talented associates dedicated to meeting the needs of our clients every day. Now, more than ever, the Bank is focused on delivering a client-centric culture across five strategic locations in Mississippi (Jackson, Flowood, Ridgeland, Oxford, Southaven) one in Memphis, Tennessee, and now one in Huntsville, Alabama. For more information, visit www.story.bank or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, or LinkedIn.