

Bank of Granite

NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

November 7, 2005

Thuss of Granite Mortgage Honored by USDA

Lenoir, N.C. – Tom L. Thuss of Granite Mortgage was recently honored by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development for making the most Guaranteed Rural Housing loans during the past fiscal year. Granite Mortgage was one of two companies who used in excess of \$15,000,000 in Guarantee Rural Housing loan funds during the same time period. Mel B. Ellis, director of single-family housing, USDA Rural Development, presented a certificate of appreciation to Thuss.

USDA Rural Development's overall mission is to improve the quality of life for rural Americans. To help accomplish their mission, loans and grants are made to provide residents with safe, affordable homes through the Guaranteed Rural Housing program. Loan eligibility is based on adjusted household income, with loans available to low- and very low-income applicants. Rural Development guarantees loans, made by mortgage lenders, such as Granite Mortgage, to moderate-income families who have limited down payment funds.

After seven years in banking as a commercial lender, Thuss joined Granite Mortgage in 1998 as a mortgage loan officer and was promoted to vice president earlier this year. His office is located at the Bank of Granite in downtown Lenoir. He is a native of Caldwell County and a graduate of West Caldwell High School. He received a Bachelor of Science in business administration from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Thuss is president of Collettsville School Athletic Boosters Club, board member of the Caldwell Council on Adolescent Health, and a Board of Trustees member at Caldwell Community College and Technical Institute.

Thuss and his wife, Vicki, reside in Collettsville with their son, 12-year-old Mason, and daughter, 8-year-old Carly. They are active members of Whitnel Pentecostal Holiness Church in Lenoir.

Bank of Granite Corporation is the parent company of Bank of Granite and Granite Mortgage, Inc. The bank operates 21 full-service banking offices in Burke, Caldwell, Catawba, Forsyth, Mecklenburg, Watauga, and Wilkes counties. Granite Mortgage, headquartered in Winston-Salem, originates home mortgages in these and other counties.

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Tom Thuss (left) with Mel Ellis, USDA