WHEREAS, the more than 68 locally owned and operated banks across the Palmetto State continue the tradition of giving back to their communities through nearly 250 banking offices with more than $10 billion in assets and over 7,000 employees; and

WHEREAS, South Carolina Community Banks contribute significantly to the economic well-being of our state and nation through their financial support, their dedication as good neighbors, and their service as financially sound and reliable sources of economic vitality in our communities; and

WHEREAS, independent banks in South Carolina reinvest in their communities through home mortgages and small business, agricultural, and student loans; and

WHEREAS, our community banks play an integral role in local economic development efforts, promoting job creation through the financing of new businesses and, as a group, contributing to a healthy business environment across the state.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Mark Sanford, Governor of the Great State of South Carolina, do hereby proclaim April 2005 as

COMMUNITY BANKING MONTH

throughout the state and encourage all South Carolinians to recognize community banks for their positive contributions to the economic stability of the Palmetto State.