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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STATE CHAMBER/AIA TO HOST SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS LUNCHEON

LITTLE ROCK —The 18th Annual Arkansas Small Business Awards Luncheon is scheduled for 11:45 a.m. Tuesday, June 3, at the Embassy Suites Little Rock, which is located at 11301 Financial Centre Parkway.

Each year the Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce and Associated Industries of Arkansas honor the U.S. Small Business Administration's Small Business Persons of the Year in Arkansas with this luncheon and awards ceremony.

This year's guest speaker will be Phillip N. Baldwin, Chairman, President & CEO of Southern Bancorp, Inc., of Arkadelphia. Southern Bancorp is a development bank holding company committed to helping transform rural economies by creating new trends of investment in people, jobs, businesses and property. It operates three development banks and three non-profit organizations in Arkansas and Mississippi.

As America's largest rural development bank, Southern is a unique organization that combines the vision, passion and creativity of non-profit organizations with the fiscal discipline, financial capacity and permanence of FDIC-insured banks. Since its formation in 1986, Southern has originated more than \$1.7 billion in development loans—primarily to individuals and organizations in the poorest areas of the United States.

Roby Brock, host and executive producer of "Talk Business," will serve as master of ceremonies. "Talk Business" airs on three television stations in Arkansas and is also featured in a number of newspapers.

Individual tickets to the luncheon are \$30 and a reserved table for eight is \$225. For more information, contact Jeff Thatcher at jthatcher@arkansasstatechamber.com or 501-210-4205.