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**Community First Fund Vice President and COO Named “2008 Eastern Pennsylvania SBA Women in Business Champion of the Year;” Award to be Given in June Ceremony**

Lancaster, PA...Joan M. Brodhead, Community First Fund Vice President, COO and Director of its Women’s Business Center has been named by the Small Business Administration as the “2008 Eastern Pennsylvania Women in Business Champion of the Year” for her commitment to the advancement of women’s business ownership and advocacy on their behalf.

Ms. Brodhead has 25 years of experience in finance and community development lending, including 17 years in commercial banking and seven years as a business owner consulting for the Community Development industry. In 2004, Ms. Brodhead joined Community First Fund, a federally certified Community Development Financial Institution which provides loans, technical assistance, and business training to entrepreneurs, affordable housing developers and community groups in under-served communities in its 13-county service area.

In her role at Community First Fund, Ms. Brodhead oversees lending, loan operations and financial management and is a member of the Senior Loan Committee. Ms. Brodhead spearheaded the effort to establish Community First Fund’s Women’s Business Center in 2004. The Women’s Business Center at Community First Fund is the only SBA-designated women’s center in the central Pennsylvania area.

Ms. Brodhead is also Chairperson of Pennsylvania Microenterprise Coalition (PMC), a statewide association of organizations, agencies and individuals dedicated to furthering microenterprise development in Pennsylvania. Their mission is to promote microenterprise as a strategy to help low-income individuals earn a better living, provide for their families and contribute to a higher quality of life in their communities. A main function of PMC is to advocate at the state level for policies benefiting microentrepreneurs.

At the national level, Ms. Brodhead participated in the Women’s Congressional Hearing and Summit sponsored by PA Congressman Joe Sestak, Vice Chair of the House Small Business Committee, in 2007. As a panel member representing organizations serving women small business owners, Ms. Brodhead spoke about the hurdles such clients face. “Two of the most critical obstacles facing women entrepreneurs are a lack of access to capital -- due to inadequate collateral, a need for small-scale loans, inability to afford commercial property, or lack of business education and track record -- and the lack of established business networks and support systems, through which business knowledge is shared,” Brodhead testified.

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Community First Fund, a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) and SBA guaranteed lender has made more than 600 loans totaling more than \$16 million since its inception in 1992. Headquartered in Lancaster, PA, Community First Fund serves 13 counties in central Pennsylvania through five offices and currently has a loan fund of more than \$10 million. The Women’s Business Center at Community First Fund provides in depth, substantive, outcome oriented business services to women entrepreneurs, both nascent and established businesses, a representative number of which are socially and economically disadvantaged. Further information can be found at [www.commfirstfund.org](http://www.commfirstfund.org).