



For Immediate Release
March 24, 2009

Contact: Scott Naugle
228-863-5362

**BancorpSouth Insurance Officer Instrumental in Launching
Insurance Degree Program at University of Houston – Downtown**

TUPELO, Miss. -March 18, 2009 – BancorpSouth, Inc. (NYSE:BXS) University of Houston-Downtown alumnus David de Roode, Chief Operating Officer of BancorpSouth Insurance Services in Houston, Texas, was instrumental in getting the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to approve a proposal to offer a Bachelor of Business Administration degree in Insurance and Risk Management.

“The idea was to create a broad educational program that would address the various aspects and levels of the insurance and risk management industry; property and casualty insurance, life and health insurance, employee benefits, contract surety and bonds as well as other forms of risk finance and the various ways to manage risk,” de Roode said.

The new degree program is designed to develop career professionals for the insurance and risk management industry, enhance the industry’s public image, and conduct research of interest for the insurance industry and consumers according to Don Bates, Dean of UHD’s College of Business.

(MORE)

The new degree plan will be offered through the new UHD Insurance and Risk Management Center (“the Center”) which will be located in the new College of Business building located at 1021 North Main Street. The Center will be a place of collaboration between education and industry to ensure that fundamental knowledge and theories of insurance and risk management is balanced appropriately with the real world.

de Roode approached Bates two years ago about the shortage of young, educated people pursuing a career in insurance and the growing void of talent within the \$800 billion industry existent in Texas today.

“Our ultimate goal is to provide the industry and the public with young, knowledgeable professionals who will require little or no additional fundamental training upon graduation to enable them to hit the ground running,” de Roode added.

BancorpSouth is a \$13.5 billion-asset bank holding company. The company operates over 300 banking and mortgage locations in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee and Texas. In addition to providing traditional banking services, credit cards, mortgages, trust and fiduciary services, the company provides investment services through its subsidiary BancorpSouth Investment Services, Inc. and insurance services through its subsidiary BancorpSouth Insurance Services, Inc. BancorpSouth’s common stock is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the trading symbol BXS.

#