



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ECB BANCORP, INC. ANNOUNCES TRANSFER TO NYSE AMEX

ENGELHARD, N.C.-ECB Bancorp, Inc. (NASDAQ:ECBE) (“ECB” or the “Company”), the parent company of East Carolina Bank (the “Bank”), announced today the transfer of its stock exchange listing to NYSE Amex from the NASDAQ Global Market. The common stock of the Company will commence trading on the NYSE Amex on Friday, December 30, 2011 under its same ticker symbol of “ECBE”. The stock will continue to trade on NASDAQ Global Markets until the transfer to the NYSE Amex has been completed.

“We are very pleased to announce the transfer of our Company’s stock exchange to NYSE Amex which offers ECB a unique market trading structure and the dedication of a designated market maker platform,” stated A. Dwight Utz, ECB’s President/CEO. “Our transfer to the NYSE Amex, we believe, benefits ECB and our shareholders by reducing volatility as a result of tighter spreads, increasing our liquidity, and provides greater visibility in the financial markets of our common stock.”

Thomas Crowder, EVP/CFO at ECB commented, “We believe now is the perfect time to transition to the NYSE Amex based on the anticipated closing of our announced private placement stock offering with institutional investors which will result in the issuance of \$79.7 million in Company common stock, subject to final regulatory approval. ECB is well poised strategically to grow and diversify our geographic footprint, including organic growth, de novo market expansion, and potential future acquisitions. What time could be better than now to begin to capture the benefits of trading our stock on the NYSE Amex platform?”

About ECB Bancorp, Inc.

ECB Bancorp, Inc. is a bank holding company, headquartered in Engelhard, North Carolina, whose wholly-owned subsidiary, The East Carolina Bank, is a state-chartered, independent community bank insured by the FDIC. The Bank provides a full range of financial services through its 25 offices covering eastern North Carolina from Currituck to Ocean Isle Beach and Greenville to Hatteras. The Bank also provides mortgages, insurance services through the Bank's licensed agents, and investment and brokerage services offered through a third-party broker-dealer. More information can be obtained by visiting ECB's web site at www.myecb.com.

“Safe Harbor Statement” Under the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995

Statements in this Press Release relating to plans, strategies, economic performance and trends, projections of results of specific activities or investments, expectations or beliefs about future events or results, and other statements that are not descriptions of historical facts, may be forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Forward-looking information is inherently subject to risks and uncertainties, and actual results could differ materially from those currently anticipated due to a number of factors, which include, but are not limited to, risk factors discussed in the Company's Annual Report on Form 10-K and in other documents filed by the Company with the Securities and Exchange Commission from time to time. Forward-looking statements may be identified by terms such as “may”, “will”, “should”, “could”, “expects”, “plans”, “intends”, “anticipates”, “feels”, “believes”, “estimates”, “predicts”, “forecasts”, “potential” or “continue”, or similar terms or the negative of these terms, or other statements concerning opinions or judgments of the Company's management about future events. Factors that could influence the accuracy of such forward-looking statements include, but are not limited to: the regulatory and shareholder approvals required for the private placement may not be obtained or may not be obtained on the terms expected or on the schedule that we anticipate; and other closing conditions for the private placement may not be satisfied. In addition, factors that could have a material impact on the results of operations of the Company include, but are not limited to, pressures on the Company's earnings, capital and liquidity resulting from current and future conditions in the credit and equity markets; the financial success or changing strategies of the Company's customers; actions of government regulators or changes in laws, regulations or accounting standards that adversely affect our business; changes in the interest rate environment and the level of market interest rates that reduce our net interest margins and/or the values of loans we make and securities we hold; weather and similar conditions, particularly the effect of hurricanes on the Company's banking and operations facilities and on the Company's customers and the communities in which it does business; continued or unexpected increases in credit losses in the Company's loan portfolio; continued adverse conditions in general economic conditions and real estate values in our banking market (particularly as those conditions affect our loan portfolio, the abilities of our borrowers to repay their loans, and the values of loan collateral); and other developments or changes in our

business that we do not expect. Although the Company believes that the expectations reflected in the forward-looking statements are reasonable, it cannot guarantee future results, levels of activity, performance or achievements. All forward-looking statements attributable to the Company are expressly qualified in their entirety by the cautionary statements in this paragraph. The Company has no obligation, and does not intend, to update these forward-looking statements.

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