



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Community Bankshares Inc. Reports Over \$69 Million in Government Guaranteed Lending in Q1 Across 14 States**

*Phoenix Lender Services and Thomas Financial Group are leading the way in the nationwide deployment of capital supporting rural jobs, food supply logistics and small business growth*

**LaGrange, GA** – April 9, 2025 – Community Bankshares Inc., the holding company of [Phoenix Lender Services](#), [Thomas Financial Group](#), and Community Bank & Trust, announced today the successful deployment of over \$69 million in Small Business Administration (SBA) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) backed loans through the end of Q1 2025. The activity spans 14 states, reflecting the company's growing national presence and commitment to delivering mission-driven capital to underserved and rural communities.

Together, the loans helped create over 400 new jobs and retain more than 350 while enabling critical infrastructure expansion, debt refinancing, and facility upgrades for small to mid-sized businesses.

The lending activity included 17 SBA loans totaling over \$23 million, funded by Community Bank & Trust, originated, underwritten, and closed by Phoenix Lender Services and Thomas Financial Group. Furthermore, another \$46.7 million in USDA-backed loans originated, underwritten, and closed by Phoenix Lender Services.

"This is exactly the type of impact we built Phoenix Lender Services to achieve," said Chris Hurn, President and CEO of Phoenix Lender Services. "We are proud to empower community banks with the tools and expertise they need to deliver transformative capital into rural and working-class communities — especially when it strengthens supply chains, creates jobs, and preserves family-run businesses."

Phoenix Lender Services serves as the Lender Service Provider (LSP) on all SBA and Commercial deals, overseeing eligibility, origination, underwriting, packaging, closing, and compliance to ensure a seamless borrower and lender experience.

"Phoenix Lender Services was instrumental in helping us deploy this capital efficiently and effectively," said Steve Jefferies, President & CEO of Community Bank & Trust. "They bring unmatched knowledge of USDA and SBA lending, and their partnership allows us to expand our reach and serve more businesses across our communities nationwide."



The growing national presence included Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, North Carolina, New York, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, South Carolina, and Wisconsin — and spans industries such as food logistics, manufacturing, healthcare, petroleum, distribution and specialty retail.

“Securing a loan through Community Bank & Trust, with the support of Phoenix Lender Services, made it possible for us to acquire Firm Foundations Framing—marking a pivotal moment in our journey,” said Ed Black, President of Firm Foundations Framing. “As a construction company building between 750 and 1,000 homes annually across Georgia, this acquisition enables us to retain and grow a business that directly impacts hundreds of lives. More importantly, it fulfills a lifelong dream of business ownership and lays the groundwork for continued growth and opportunity within our communities.”

“This isn’t our first time working with Thomas Financial Group—and for good reason. We wouldn’t be where we are today without their support,” said Kevin Durling, President of Petroleum Equipment & Services, Inc. “The company’s expertise and understanding of the process are unmatched.”

#### **About Community Bankshares Inc.**

Community Bankshares, Inc., is a dynamic company revolutionizing the financial landscape through its support for America’s businesses. As a mission-focused company, we are redefining how lending capital is provided across the nation and its territories in ways that promote business stability and encourage local area prosperity. In doing so, we foster economic growth, job creation and retention, and community strength.

#### **About Phoenix Lender Services**

Based in Georgia and serving clients nationwide, Phoenix Lender Services offers a comprehensive suite of commercial lending solutions, including loan originating, underwriting, closing, and servicing; participant lender matching (USDA); secondary market sales; portfolio management; risk analysis; and compliance reviews and regulatory support. Our seasoned professionals combine extensive industry expertise in SBA and USDA government-guaranteed lending with industry-leading technologies to deliver tailored solutions that align with each client’s unique strategic goals.

#### **About Community Bank & Trust**

Community Bank & Trust, a subsidiary of Community Bankshares Inc., is a trusted financial institution dedicated to serving individuals, families, and businesses across its service area and nationwide. Headquartered in LaGrange, GA, we are committed to leveraging our rural roots to empower local consumers and commercial entities, as well as underserved groups and communities, with a broad slate of accessible, personalized banking solutions while also reaching a diverse and growing nationwide audience.



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