

Ameris Bancorp
Form S-8
January 24, 2006

As filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission on January 24, 2006

Registration No. 333-_____

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20549

FORM S-8
REGISTRATION STATEMENT

Under
The Securities Act of 1933

AMERIS BANCORP

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in its Charter)

GEORGIA
(State or Other Jurisdiction of
Incorporation or Organization)

58-1456434
(I.R.S. Employer
Identification No.)

24 2nd Avenue, S.E.
Moultrie, Georgia 31768
(Address of Principal Executive Offices)

**ABC BANCORP 2005 OMNIBUS STOCK
OWNERSHIP AND LONG-TERM INCENTIVE PLAN**

(Full Title of the Plan)

Mr. Edwin W. Hortman, Jr.

Chief Executive Officer

Ameris Bancorp

24 2nd Avenue, S.E.

Moultrie, Georgia 31768

(229) 890-1111

(Name, Address and Telephone Number of Agent for Service)

CALCULATION OF REGISTRATION FEE

Title of Each Class of Securities	Amount to be Registered⁽²⁾	Proposed Maximum Offering Price Per Share⁽³⁾	Proposed Maximum Aggregate Offering Price	Amount of Registration Fee
to be Registered Common Stock, \$1.00 par value per share ⁽¹⁾	1,020,000	\$20.08	\$20,481,600	\$2,191.53

- (1) Represents shares issuable pursuant to the ABC Bancorp 2005 Omnibus Stock Ownership and Long-Term Incentive Plan (the Plan).
 - (2) This registration statement also relates to an indeterminate number of additional shares of Common Stock that may become issuable pursuant to anti-dilution and adjustment provisions of the Plan. In addition, pursuant to Rule 416(c) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, this registration statement also covers an indeterminate amount of interests to be offered or sold pursuant to the Plan.
 - (3) Estimated solely for the purpose of calculating the registration fee pursuant to Rules 457(c) and 457(h) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, based upon the average of the high and low prices of the Registrant's common stock on January 20, 2006 as reported by The Nasdaq Stock Market, Inc.
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PART I

INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE SECTION 10(a) PROSPECTUS

Item 1. Plan Information.

The documents containing the information specified in this Item 1 will be sent or given to employees, officers, directors or others as specified by Rule 428(b)(1) under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended (the Securities Act). In accordance with the rules and regulations of the Securities and Exchange Commission (the Commission) and the instructions to Form S-8, such documents are not being filed with the Commission either as part of this Registration Statement or as prospectuses or prospectus supplements pursuant to Rule 424 under the Securities Act.

Item 2. Registration Information and Employee Plan Annual Information.

The documents containing the information specified in this Item 2 will be sent or given to employees, officers, directors or others as specified by Rule 428(b)(1) under the Securities Act. In accordance with the rules and regulations of the Commission and the instructions to Form S-8, such documents are not being filed with the Commission either as part of this Registration Statement or as prospectuses or prospectus supplements pursuant to Rule 424 under the Securities Act.

PART II

INFORMATION REQUIRED IN THE REGISTRATION STATEMENT

Item 3. Incorporation of Certain Documents by Reference.

The following documents previously filed with the Commission are incorporated by reference in this Registration Statement:

- (i) The Registrant's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2004;
- (ii) The Registrant's Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q for the quarters ended March 31, 2005, June 30, 2005 and September 30, 2005;
- (iii) The Registrant's Current Reports on Form 8-K filed on January 21, 2005, February 1, 2005, March 15, 2005, April 21, 2005, May 11, 2005, May 16, 2005, May 23, 2005, July 7, 2005, July 20, 2005, August 31, 2005, October 19, 2005, December 1, 2005 and December 20, 2005; and

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(iv) The Registrant's Registration Statement on Form 8-A filed on September 2, 1987.

All documents subsequently filed by the Registrant pursuant to Sections 13(a), 13(c), 14 and 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the Exchange Act), prior to the filing of a post-effective amendment to this Registration Statement which indicates that all the shares of the Registrant's common stock offered hereby have been sold or which deregisters all of such shares then remaining unsold, shall be deemed to be incorporated by reference in this Registration Statement and to be a part hereof from the date of filing of such documents. Any statement contained in a document incorporated or deemed to be incorporated by reference herein shall be deemed to be modified or superseded for purposes of this Registration Statement to the extent that a statement contained herein modifies or supersedes such statement. Any such statement so modified or superseded shall not be deemed, except as so modified or superseded, to constitute a part of this Registration Statement.

Item 4. Description of Securities.

Not applicable.

Item 5. Interests of Named Experts and Counsel.

The validity of the shares of the Registrant's common stock registered hereby has been passed upon by Rogers & Hardin LLP.

Item 6. Indemnification of Officers and Directors.

Subsection (a) of Section 14-2-851 of the Georgia Business Corporation Code (the "GBCC") provides that a corporation may indemnify an individual who is party to a proceeding because he or she is or was a director against liability incurred in the proceeding if (1) such individual conducted himself or herself in good faith; and (2) such individual reasonably believed (A) in the case of conduct in his or her official capacity, that such conduct was in the best interests of the corporation, (B) in all other cases, that such conduct was at least not opposed to the best interests of the corporation, and (C) in the case of any criminal proceeding, that the individual had no reasonable cause to believe that such conduct was unlawful. Subsection (d) of Section 14-2-851 of the GBCC provides that a corporation may not indemnify a director in connection with a proceeding by or in the right of the corporation, except for reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the proceeding if it is determined that the director has met the relevant standard of conduct, or in connection with any proceeding with respect to conduct for which he or she was adjudged liable on the basis that personal benefit was improperly received by him or her, whether or not involving action in his or her official capacity. Notwithstanding the foregoing, pursuant to Section 14-2-854 of the GBCC, a court may order a corporation to indemnify a director if such court determines, in view of all the relevant circumstances, that it is fair and reasonable to indemnify or advance expenses to the director, even if the director has not met the relevant standard of conduct set forth in subsections (a) and (b) of Section 14-2-851 of the GBCC, failed to comply with Section 14-2-853 of the GBCC, or was adjudged liable in a proceeding referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) of subsection (d) of Section 14-2-851 of the GBCC, but if the director was adjudged so liable, the indemnification shall be limited to reasonable expenses incurred in connection with the proceeding.

Section 14-2-852 of the GBCC provides that a corporation shall indemnify a director who was wholly successful, on the merits or otherwise, in the defense of any proceeding to which he or she was a party because he or she was a director of the corporation against reasonable expenses incurred by the director in connection with the proceeding.

Section 14-2-857 of the GBCC provides that a corporation may indemnify and advance expenses to an officer of the corporation who is a party to a proceeding because he or she is an officer of the corporation to the same extent as a director. If the officer is not a director (or if the officer is a director but the sole basis on which he or she is made a party to the proceeding is an act or omission solely as an officer), the corporation may also indemnify and advance expenses to such officer to such further extent as may be provided by the articles of incorporation or the bylaws of the corporation, by a resolution of the board of directors of the corporation, or by contract, except for liability arising out of conduct that constitutes (1) the appropriation, in violation of their duties, of any business opportunity of the corporation, (2) acts or omissions which involve intentional misconduct or a knowing violation of law, (3) the types of liability set forth in Section 14-2-832 of the GBCC or (4) receipt of an improper personal benefit. An officer of a corporation who is not a director is entitled to mandatory indemnification under Section 14-2-852 of the GBCC and may apply to a court under Section 14-2-854 of the GBCC for indemnification or advances, in each case to the same extent to which a director may be entitled to indemnification under those provisions. Finally, a corporation may also indemnify an employee or agent who is not a director to the extent, consistent with public policy, that may be provided by its articles of incorporation or bylaws, by general or specific action by its board of directors or by contract.

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Article XI of the Articles of Incorporation of the Registrant provides that, except as may be limited by the GBCC or any successor law, no director shall be personally liable to the Registrant or any of its shareholders for monetary damages for breach of his or her duty of care or other duty as a director.

Article VII of the Bylaws of the Registrant provides that every person (and the heirs and legal representatives of such person) who is or was a director or officer of the Registrant or any other corporation of which he or she served as such at the request of the Registrant and of which the Registrant directly or indirectly is a shareholder or creditor, or in which or in the stocks, bonds, securities or other obligations of which the Registrant is in any way interested, may be indemnified for any liability and expense resulting from any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, civil, criminal, administrative or investigative or derivative or otherwise, or in connection with any appeal relating thereto, in which he or she may become involved, as a party or prospective party or otherwise, by reason of any action taken or not taken in his or her capacity as a director or officer or as a member of any committee appointed by the board of directors of the Registrant to act for, in the interest of, or on behalf of the Registrant, whether or not he or she continues to be a director or officer at the time such liability or expense is incurred; provided such person acted in good faith and in a manner he or she reasonably believed to be in or not opposed to the best interests of the Registrant and, in addition, with respect to any criminal action or proceeding, did not have reasonable cause to believe that his or her conduct was unlawful. The termination of any claim, action, suit or proceeding, by judgment, order, compromise, settlement (with or without court approval) or conviction or upon a plea of guilty or of nolo contendere, or its equivalent, does not create a presumption that a director or officer did not meet the standards of conduct set forth in the Bylaws. Expenses incurred with respect to any claim, action, suit or proceeding of the character described in Article VII of the Bylaws of the Registrant may be advanced by the Registrant prior to the final disposition thereof upon receipt of any undertaking by or on behalf of the recipient to repay such amount, unless it is ultimately determined that he or she is entitled to indemnification under the Bylaws.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, Article VII of the Registrant's Bylaws provides that no officer or director who was or is a party to any action or suit by or in the right of the Registrant to procure a judgment in its favor by reason of the fact that he or she is or was an officer or director of the Registrant or such other corporation can be indemnified in respect of any claim, issue or matter as to which such person is adjudged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of his or her duty to the Registrant, unless the court in which such action or suit was brought determines that, despite the adjudication of liability and in view of all the circumstances of the case, such person is fairly and reasonably entitled to indemnity for such expenses as the court deems proper.

Article VII of the Registrant's Bylaws further provides that every person (and the heirs and legal representatives of such person) referred to above who has been wholly successful, on the merits or otherwise, with the respect to such claim, action, suit or proceeding is entitled to indemnification as of right without any further action or approval by the board of directors of the Registrant, and any indemnification pursuant to the Bylaws of the Registrant will be made at the discretion of the Registrant only if (a) the board of directors, acting by majority vote of a quorum consisting of directors who were not parties to such claim, action, suit or proceeding, present or voting, finds that the director or officer met the standard of conduct set forth in the Bylaws, or (b) no such quorum of the board of directors exists, independent legal counsel at the request of either the Registrant or the person seeking indemnification, delivers to the Registrant such counsel's written opinion that such director or officer met such standards, or (c) the holders of a majority of stock then entitled to vote for the election of directors determines by affirmative vote that such director or officer met such standards.

The rights of indemnification provided in Article VII of the Registrant's Bylaws are in addition to (i) any rights to which any director or officer may otherwise be entitled under any bylaw, agreement, vote of shareholders or otherwise and (ii) the power of the Registrant to purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any director or officer against any liability asserted against him or her and incurred by him or her in such capacity, or arising out of his or her status as such, regardless of whether the Registrant would have the power to indemnify against such liability under the Bylaws or otherwise.

The Registrant's Bylaws further provide that any repeal or modification of the Bylaws by the shareholders of the Registrant cannot adversely affect any right or protection of a director of the Registrant existing at the time of such repeal or modification.

Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act may be permitted to directors, officers or persons controlling the Registrant pursuant to the foregoing provisions, the Registrant has been informed that, in the opinion of the Commission, such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is, therefore, unenforceable.

Item 7. Exemption from Registration Claimed.

Not applicable.

Item 8. Exhibits.

The exhibits to this Registration Statement are listed on the Exhibit Index included elsewhere herein.

Item 9. Undertakings.

(a) The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes:

- (1) To file, during any period in which offers or sales are being made, a post-effective amendment to this Registration Statement:
 - (i) To include any prospectus required by Section 10(a)(3) of the Securities Act;
 - (ii) To reflect in the prospectus any facts or events arising after the effective date of this Registration Statement (or the most recent post-effective amendment thereof) which, individually or in the aggregate, represent a fundamental change in the information set forth in this Registration Statement. Notwithstanding the foregoing, any increase or decrease in volume of securities offered (if the total dollar value securities offered would not exceed that which was registered) and any deviation from the low or high end of the estimated maximum offering range may be reflected in the form of prospectus filed with the Commission pursuant to Rule 424(b) under the Securities Act if, in the aggregate, the changes in volume and price represent no more than a 20% change in the maximum aggregate offering price set forth in the Calculation of Registration Fee table set forth in this Registration Statement; and
 - (iii) To include any material information with respect to the plan of distribution not previously disclosed in this Registration Statement or any material change to such information in this Registration Statement;

provided, however, that paragraphs (a)(1)(i) and (a)(1)(ii) do not apply if the Registration Statement is on Form S-8, and the information required to be included in a post-effective amendment by those paragraphs is contained in reports filed with or furnished to the Commission by the Registrant pursuant to Section 13 or Section 15(d) of the Exchange Act that are incorporated by reference in the Registrant Statement;

- (2) That, for the purpose of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each such post-effective amendment shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered therein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

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- (3) To remove registration by means of a post-effective amendment any of the securities being registered which remain unsold at the termination of the offering.
- (4) That, for the purpose of determining liability under the Securities Act to any purchaser, each prospectus filed pursuant to Rule 424(b) as part of a registration statement relating to an offering, other than registration statements relying on Rule 430B or other than prospectuses filed in reliance on Rule 430A, shall be deemed to be part of and included in the registration statement as of the date it is first used after

effectiveness. *Provided, however,* that no statement made in a registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement or made in a document incorporated or deemed incorporated by reference into the registration statement or prospectus that is part of the registration statement will, as to a purchaser with a time of contract of sale prior to such first use, supersede or modify any statement that was made in the registration statement or prospectus that was part of the registration statement or made in any such document immediately prior to such date of first use; and

- (5) That, for the purpose of determining liability of the Registrant under the Securities Act to any purchaser in the initial distribution of the securities, the undersigned Registrant undertakes that in a primary offering of securities of the undersigned Registrant pursuant to this Registration Statement, regardless of the underwriting method used to sell the securities to the purchaser, if the securities are offered or sold to such purchaser by means of any of the following communications, the undersigned Registrant will be a seller to the purchaser and will be considered to offer or sell such securities to such purchaser:
- (i) Any preliminary prospectus or prospectus of the undersigned Registrant relating to the offering required to be filed pursuant to Rule 424;
 - (ii) Any free writing prospectus relating to the offering prepared by or on behalf of the undersigned Registrant or used or referred to by the undersigned Registrant;
 - (iii) The portion of any other free writing prospectus relating to the offering containing material information about the undersigned Registrant or its securities provided by or on behalf of an undersigned Registrant; and
 - (iv) Any other communication that is an offer in the offering made by the undersigned Registrant to the purchaser.

(b) The undersigned Registrant hereby undertakes that, for purposes of determining any liability under the Securities Act, each filing of the Registrant's Annual Report pursuant to Section 13(a) or Section 15(d) of the Exchange Act (and, where applicable, each filing of an employee benefit plan's annual report pursuant to Section 15(d) of the Exchange Act) that is incorporated by reference in the Registration Statement shall be deemed to be a new registration statement relating to the securities offered herein, and the offering of such securities at that time shall be deemed to be the initial bona fide offering thereof.

(c) Insofar as indemnification for liabilities arising under the Securities Act may be permitted to directors, officers and controlling persons of the Registrant pursuant to the foregoing provisions, or otherwise, the Registrant has been advised that in the opinion of the Commission such indemnification is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and is, therefore, unenforceable. In the event that a claim for indemnification against such liabilities (other than the payment by the Registrant of expenses incurred or paid by a director, officer or controlling person of the Registrant in the successful defense of any action, suit or proceeding) is asserted by such director, officer or controlling person in connection with the securities being registered, the Registrant will, unless in the opinion of its counsel the matter has been settled by controlling precedent, submit to a court of appropriate jurisdiction the question whether such indemnification by it is against public policy as expressed in the Securities Act and will be governed by the final adjudication of such issue.

SIGNATURES

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, the Registrant certifies that it has reasonable grounds to believe that it meets all of the requirements for filing on Form S-8 and has duly caused this Registration Statement to be signed on its behalf by the undersigned, thereunto duly authorized, in the city of Moultrie, state of Georgia, on this 24th day of January, 2006.

AMERIS BANCORP

By: /s/ Edwin W. Hortman, Jr.

 Edwin W. Hortman, Jr.
President and Chief Executive Officer

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, that each of the undersigned officers and directors of Ameris Bancorp hereby constitutes and appoints each of Edwin W. Hortman, Jr. and Dennis J. Zember Jr., his attorney-in-fact and agent, each with full power of substitution and resubstitution for him in any and all capacities, to sign any or all amendments or post-effective amendments to this Registration Statement, and to file the same, with exhibits thereto and other documents in connection therewith, in connection with the registration of the shares of the Registrant's common stock under the Securities Act of 1933, with the Securities and Exchange Commission, granting unto such attorney-in-fact and agent full power and authority to do and perform each and every act and thing requisite and necessary in connection with such matters as fully to all intents and purposes as he might or could do in person, hereby ratifying and confirming all that such attorney-in-fact and agent or his substitute may do or cause to be done by virtue hereof.

Pursuant to the requirements of the Securities Act of 1933, this Registration Statement has been signed by the following persons in the capacities and on the date indicated.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>
/s/ Edwin W. Hortman, Jr. _____	President and Chief Executive Officer	January 24, 2006
Edwin W. Hortman, Jr.	(Principal Executive Officer)	
/s/ Dennis J. Zember Jr. _____	Executive Vice President and Chief	January 24, 2006
Dennis J. Zember Jr.	Financial Officer (Principal Financial Officer and Principal Accounting Officer)	
/s/ Johnny W. Floyd _____	Director	January 24, 2006
Johnny W. Floyd		
/s/ J. Raymond Fulp _____	Director	January 24, 2006
J. Raymond Fulp		
/s/ Kenneth J. Hunnicutt _____	Director	January 24, 2006

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Kenneth J. Hunnicutt

/s/ Daniel B. Jeter

Director

January 24, 2006

Daniel B. Jeter

/s/ Glenn A. Kirbo

Director

January 24, 2006

Glenn A. Kirbo

/s/ Robert P. Lynch

Director

January 24, 2006

Robert P. Lynch

/s/ Brooks Sheldon

Director

January 24, 2006

Brooks Sheldon

/s/ Eugene M. Vereen, Jr.

Director

January 24, 2006

Eugene M. Vereen, Jr.

/s/ Henry C. Wortman

Director

January 24, 2006

Henry C. Wortman

EXHIBIT INDEX

Exhibit No.	Description	Method of Filing
4.1	ABC Bancorp 2005 Omnibus Stock Ownership and Long-Term Incentive Plan.	Incorporated by reference to Appendix A to the Registrant's Definitive Proxy Statement filed with the Commission on April 18, 2005.
4.2	Form of Incentive Stock Option Agreement.	Filed herewith.
4.3	Form of Non-Qualified Stock Option Agreement.	Filed herewith.
4.4	Form of Restricted Stock Grant Agreement.	Filed herewith.
5.1	Opinion of Rogers & Hardin LLP.	Filed herewith.
23.1	Consent of Mauldin & Jenkins, Certified Public Accountants and Consultants, LLC.	Filed herewith.
23.2	Consent of Rogers & Hardin LLP (contained in Exhibit 5.1 hereto).	Filed herewith.
24.1	Powers of Attorney (contained on the signature page hereto).	