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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **EQUITY BANCSHARES, INC. ANNOUNCES 3<sup>rd</sup> QUARTER 2011 EARNINGS**

Wichita, Kansas (October 31, 2011) – Equity Bancshares, Inc. (“EBI” or the “Company”), the Wichita-based holding company for Equity Bank and Signature Bank, today announced unaudited results for the nine months ended September 30, 2011.

Commenting on the Company’s nine (9) month results for 2011, Brad Elliott, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer stated:

“We are very pleased with our performance through the third quarter of 2011. Our income after tax was \$2.0 million for the first nine months, a 40% increase from a year ago. We received approximately \$16.4 million from the Small Business Lending Fund in exchange for the issuance of the Company’s preferred stock and redeemed our TARP warrants in the third quarter as well. This reduced earnings per share, but this was a onetime expense. Additionally, we expensed over \$200 thousand of our prior acquisition expenses in the third quarter. Regardless, we are still ahead of last year, and we look to continue to have strong core earnings from operations through year end.

Total loans grew by \$39 million in the first nine months of 2011. This growth can be attributed to the hard work of our Commercial Loan team. We are targeting small businesses as part of our commitment in being a participant in the U.S. Treasury’s Small Business Lending Fund.

I am pleased to report that we are on track to complete the merger of University National Bank in Lawrence and the acquisition of four branch locations from Citizens Bank and Trust in Topeka. We expect to close both transactions in December. We will have additional expenses associated with these acquisitions for the fourth quarter of 2011 as new accounting rules require us to expense all acquisition expenses instead of capitalizing them. In the end, it has the same effect on tangible book value, but will reduce our income for 2011.

Our banks are well capitalized and well positioned for the future.”

#### **Financial Review**

Net income allocable to common shareholders was \$1.3 million for the nine months ended September 30, 2011; an increase of \$309 thousand compared to the nine month period ended

September 30, 2010. The annualized earnings per share as of September 30, 2011 were \$0.39 as compared to \$0.54 as of September 30, 2010. The lower earnings per share is attributable to the increased number of shares from the capital raise in October 2010.

Total deposits at the end of the third quarter were \$374.6 million, up \$7.4 million from \$367.2 million at September 30, 2010. Core Deposits increased to \$219.9 million, up from \$201.2 million at September 30, 2010, an increase of \$18.7 million.

Total assets increased by \$38.1 million to \$495.8 million as of September 30, 2011, as compared to \$457.7 million at September 30, 2010.

EBI's book equity as of September 30, 2011 was \$81.2 million, up approximately \$29.6 million from \$51.6 million on September 30, 2010. As of September 30, 2011, the book value per common share was \$14.26, and the tangible book value per share stood at \$11.49 per share.

Non-performing assets [non-accrual loans, accruing loans 90 days or more past due and other real estate owned ("OREO")] totaled \$8.7 million, or 1.76% of Total Assets as of September 30, 2011. As of September 30, 2011, the allowance for loan losses stood at \$4.4 million, or 1.36%, of total loans. Gross loans totaled \$325.0 million, a \$40 million increase from \$285.0 million a year earlier.

EQUITY BANK'S capital ratios exceed the FDIC regulatory standards for well capitalized banks (see below). This capital structure positions the Bank for continued growth.

	<b><i>EQUITY BANK</i></b>	<b><i>EQUITY BANK</i></b>	<b><i>FDIC WELL-</i></b>
	<b><i>CAPITAL TO</i></b>	<b><i>CAPITAL TO</i></b>	<b><i>CAPITALIZED</i></b>
	<b><i>ASSETS (9/30/11)</i></b>	<b><i>ASSETS (9/30/10)</i></b>	<b><i>STANDARD</i></b>
Core capital (leverage) ratio	13.84%	8.83%	5.00%
Tier 1 risk-based capital ratio	18.42%	11.81%	6.00%
Total risk-based capital ratio	19.66%	13.06%	10.00%

Non-interest expenses, including the \$203 thousand of acquisition expenses, totaled \$11.2 million, or 3.45% of average assets, for the nine month period ended September 30, 2011. This compares favorably to \$11.2 million, or 4.05% of average assets, for the nine months ended September 30, 2010.

The net interest income after the loan loss provision was \$12.0 million for the nine month period ended September 30, 2011, up from \$11.0 million for the comparable period in 2010, an increase of \$1.0 million.

The net earnings after tax were \$2.0 million for the nine months ended September 30, 2011, as compared to \$1.4 million for the nine month period ending September 30, 2010, a strong increase of approximately \$600,000 or more than 40 percent.

Equity Bancshares, Inc. is the bank holding company for Equity Bank, a nationally chartered bank with locations in and around Wichita, Kansas City and Ellis and Hays, Kansas. The holding company also owns Signature Bank, a state-chartered bank located in Haddam, Kansas. The two banks' deposits are insured up to the maximum legal amount by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation ("FDIC").