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Contact: Roger Aguinaldo, CEO and Publisher
718-997-7900 x7906

Finalists Named in The 4th Annual M&A Advisor Awards

Top Deals and Professionals will be honored December 5 in New York City

New York, October 28, 2005 – *The M&A Advisor* has named 123 finalists in 22 different categories in preparation for its annual tribute to the outstanding achievements in the middle market M&A industry. The winners will be announced at a black-tie awards dinner on Monday, December 5 at the New York Athletic Club in New York City.

“We are astonished and gratified at the outpouring of enthusiasm we have seen for these Awards. Middle market M&A professionals deserve to be recognized for their accomplishments this past year and, more importantly, their contribution to the US economy,” says Roger Aguinaldo, Publisher and CEO of *The M&A Advisor*.

“The volume and quality of entries is growing from year to year,” said Barry Kaplan, managing editor of *The M&A Advisor* newsletter and chair of the Nominations Committee for this year’s competition. “This year we’ve added four new categories, such as Financing Deal of the Year, into the list of awards, to reflect the tremendous growth of the middle market and the expanded response.”

A panel of judges from the business schools and the financial press will review the entries and select the winners.

For more information, please call 718-997-7900 or visit us on the web at www.maadvisor.com/conference.

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The M&A Advisor is a newsletter, website, and conference publisher delivering services that provide executives, M&A professionals, and others about the intricate world of buying and selling middle market companies. The company’s products include *The M&A Advisor* monthly newsletter; The M&A Advisor Online (<http://www.maadvisor.com>); The M&A Advisor Conference series (<http://www.maadvisor.com/conference>); The M&A ALERTS e-zine; special reports, software, and publications; and consulting services. For further information, visit <http://www.maadvisor.com>, or call 1-877-99-MERGE (1-877-996-3743).

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The list of finalists begins on the next pages. Five (5) pages follow.

The finalists are:

Major Awards

U.S Middle Market Deal of the Year

- AGL Resources acquires NUI Corp.
- Bear Stearns Merchant Banking Acquires Minority Interest in Stuart Weitzman Holdings, LLC
- Chicago Growth Partners acquires eInstruction Corp.
- First Reserve Corp. acquires Chart Industries from Oaktree Capital Management, et al.
- IAC/Interactive Corp. acquires Cornerstone Brands, Inc. from Madison Dearborn Capital Partners LP and JP Morgan Partners LLC
- Iconix Brand Group, Inc. acquires JOE BOXER Brand from Joe Boxer Co., LLC
- L'Oreal acquires SkinCeuticals, Inc.
- Modine Aftermarket merges with Transpro, forming Proliance International
- Pitney Bowes Inc. acquires World Distribution Services, Inc.
- Psychiatric Solutions, Inc. acquires Behavioral Healthcare Corp. from Ardent Health Services

International / Cross Border Deal of the Year

- Investor Group acquires an indirect interest in Arapar SA from DnB NOR ASA
- Belron International acquires Elite Auto Glass, Inc.
- Castle Harlan Partners IV, LP acquires Polypipe Bldg. Prods., Ltd. from IMI plc
- East Jordan Iron Works acquires Crom etal from the Cromback Family
- Nortel Networks acquires PEC Solutions, Inc.
- Schneider Electric Acquires Power Measurement, Inc from GFI Energy Ventures, LLC
- Zodiac SA acquires Polaris Pool Systems, Inc. from Quad-C Management, Inc.
- Zodiac SA acquires substantially all assets of C&D Aerospace Group

Turnaround Deal of the Year

- Armor Holdings, Inc. acquires Second Chance Body Armor, Inc.
- Gate-rights Transfer and DIP facility for ATA Airlines
- Restructuring of Durango S.A. de C.V.
- Turnaround of Mauna Loa Macadamia Nut Corp.
- Petters Group acquires Polaroid Corp.
- Sonepar USA acquires Stuart C. Irby Co.
- Ultimate Acquisitions Partners acquires and turns around Ultimate Electronics

Financing Deal of the Year (New Category)

- Investor Group acquires an indirect interest in Arapar SA from DnB NOR ASA
- Recapitalization of Diagnostic Imaging Group
- The Holland Group, Inc., subordinated note
- Liquidnet - \$250 million private placement
- Recapitalization of Northern Safety Co., Inc.
- Unitranche Financing Facility for Red Hawk Industries
- Leveraged Finance facility for Woodstream Corp.

U.S. Middle Market Deal Maker of the Year

- Brown Gibbons Lang and Livingstone Guarantee Buy-side team
- Douglas Cifu, Partner, Paul, Weiss, Rifkin, Wharton & Garrison LLP
- Robert W. D'Loren, President and CEO, UCC Capital Corp.
- Adam Field, Senior Vice President, Medical Capital Corp.
- Steve McLaughlin, Managing Partner, Financial Technology Partners LLC
- John M. Reiss, Partner, White & Case LLP
- Kenneth Wasik, Managing Director, Houlihan Lokey Howard & Zukin

Woman Deal Maker of the Year

- Anita M. Antenucci, Managing Director, Houlihan Lokey Howard & Zukin
- Venita E. Fields, Managing Director, Smith Whiley & Co.
- Katharine A. Martin, Partner, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati
- Marguerite A. Piret, Managing Director, Newbury Piret & Co.
- Rebecca Vreeken, Managing Director, Provident Healthcare Partners

Industry Awards

Business to Business (New Category)

- Allied Capital acquires Service Champ, Inc. from ZS Fund
- Investment Technology Grp. acquires The MacGregor Group
- Pitney Bowes Inc. acquires World Distribution Services, Inc.
- Roberson Transportation Cos. sells PFT Roberson and Worldwide Logistics to Annett Hldgs and CX Roberson to Celadon Grp
- Sonepar USA acquires Stuart C. Irby Co.

Computer and Information Technology Deal of the Year

- Alion Science and Technology Corp. acquires John J. McMullen Associates, Inc.
- Chicago Growth Partners acquires eInstruction Corp.
- Plantronics, Inc. acquires Altec Lansing Technologies, Inc.
- Sensytech, Inc merges into Argon Engineering Associates, Inc.
- IPO of VeriFone, Inc.

Manufacturing - Consumer Deal of the Year

- Bear Stearns Merchant Banking Acquires Minority Interest in Stuart Weitzman Holdings, LLC
- L'Oreal acquires SkinCeuticals, Inc.
- Management Buyout of Norwesco, Inc. from Norwest Equity Partners, et al.
- Petters Group acquires Polaroid Corp.
- Zodiac SA acquires Polaris Pool Systems, Inc.

Manufacturing- Industrial Deal of the Year

- Audax Group acquires Victor Oolitic Stone Co.
- East Jordan Iron Works acquires Crom etal from the Cromback Family
- Sale of High Voltage Engineering Corp.'s businesses to four buyers
- Modine Aftermarket merges with Transpro, forming Proliance Int'l
- Acquisition of Performance Fibers from Honeywell International by a portfolio company of Sun Capital Partners

Media and Telecommunications Deal of the Year

- ARTIST Direct Inc. acquires MediaDefender, Inc.
- Corvis Corp. acquires Focal Communications Corp.
- EDC Acquires CD/DVD operations of Universal Music Group, Inc.
- Nortel Networks acquires PEC Solutions, Inc.
- WiderThan.com acquires Ztango

Financial Services Deal of the Year

- Keybank acquires Malone Mortgage
- Liquidnet - \$250 million private placement
- Monitor Group Acquires Strategic Pricing Group
- Securitization of Rosbank Credit Card Receivables
- Valley National Bank Acquires NorCrown Bank

Healthcare Deal of the Year (New Category)

- Apria Health Care Group acquires homecare div. of Air Liquide Healthcare America
- Extencicare Healthcare Services, Inc. acquires Assisted Living Concepts, Inc.
- IHHI acquires four hospitals
- Northwestern Memorial Home Health Care simultaneously divests its Home Health Care operations to TLC Health Care Services and its Home Infusion Therapy Services to Option Care, Inc
- Psychiatric Solutions, Inc. acquires Behavioral Healthcare Assets from Ardent Health Services LLC

Life Sciences Deal of the Year

- Recapitalization of Diagnostic Imaging Group
- Madison Dearborn Partners acquires Sirona Dental Systems
- McKesson, Inc. acquires D&K Healthcare Resources, Inc.
- Monitor Clipper Partners Acquires MSC
- Omnicare, Inc. acquires excellRx, Inc.

Retailing Deal of the Year (New Category)

- Charming Shoppes, Inc. acquires Crosstown Traders, Inc.
- Lone Star Funds affiliate acquires Bi-Lo and Bruno's Supermarket Chains from Royal Ahold
- Pacific Equity Partners acquires Worldwide Restaurant Concepts
- Turner's Outdoors, Inc. acquires Andrews's Sporting Goods
- Acquisition/Turnaround of Ultimate Electronics, Inc.

Consumer Deal of the Year

- Allied Capital acquires Advantage Sales & Marketing
- BLB Investors acquires US business of Wembley plc
- eBay, Inc. acquires Shopping.com Ltd.
- IAC/Interactive Corp. acquires Cornerstone Brands
- Iconix Brand Group, Inc. acquires JOE BOXER Brand

Professional Awards

Investment Banking Firm of the Year

- The Braff Group
- Financial Technology Partners LLC
- Global M&A
- Harris Williams & Co.
- Houlihan Lokey Howard & Zukin

Financing Firm of the Year

- Allied Capital
- Apollo Investment Corporation
- Fifth Street Capital LLC
- Golub Capital Incorporated
- Medical Capital Corp.

Private Equity Firm of the Year

- Bear Stearns Merchant Banking
- First Reserve Corp.
- Madison Dearborn Partners LLC
- Sun Capital Partners, Inc.
- TSG Consumer Partners

Accounting Firm of the Year

- Crowe Chizek and Company LLC
- Deloitte & Touche
- Ernst & Young
- Grant Thornton LLP
- PriceWaterhouse Coopers

Law Firm of the Year

- Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP
- Cooley Godward LLP
- Kirkland & Ellis LLP
- Paul, Weiss, Rifkin, Wharton & Garrison LLP
- Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati

Corporate / Strategic Firm of the Year

- Armor Holdings, Inc. - Manufacturing - Industrial
- Convergys Corp. - Business to Business
- Fiserv, Inc. - Computers and Information Technology
- The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. - Media
- Pitney Bowes, Inc. - Business to Business

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