



Circle Peak Capital Announces Acquisition and Recapitalization of WealthTrust, Inc.

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NEW YORK, Nov 13, 2006 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- Circle Peak Capital LLC announced today its acquisition and recapitalization of WealthTrust, Inc., a subsidiary of Morgan Keegan & Co. and Regions Financial Corporation

WealthTrust is a leading national holding company for investment advisory firms that provide comprehensive wealth management services to high net worth families, individuals and institutions. Circle Peak Capital partnered with management in the transaction, and junior capital provider Falcon Investment Advisors, LLC, based in Boston, MA and New York, NY, a leading private investment firm that manages in excess of \$650 million. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

WealthTrust holds ownership interests in ten affiliated firms across the U.S., employs approximately 125 people, and collectively manages more than \$6.5 billion in assets. WealthTrust ranks among the top 20 independent wealth management firms in the United States, according to Cambridge International Partners Inc. The Company provides its affiliates with value-add support in the areas of client service, sales and marketing, compliance, operations, technology, and corporate development, uniquely positioning WealthTrust for continued profitable growth.

"The WealthTrust model of offering attentive service and customized solutions tailored to clients' evolving financial needs is a compelling strategy in today's competitive marketplace. WealthTrust's experienced management team has demonstrated tremendous success in identifying, supporting, and growing affiliate relationships -- key building blocks for profitable and aggressive future expansion," said Circle Peak Capital Managing Partner R. Adam Smith.

"Its comprehensive platform of services is right on target with what wealth holders seek today," said Circle Peak Capital senior operating advisor and WealthTrust board chairman Clinton J. Kendrick. "WealthTrust is an exceptional firm and we are pleased to form this partnership and back its managers in order to extend the platform into a leading national wealth management enterprise."

WealthTrust's headquarters are located in Nashville, TN. The Company affiliates presently include: WealthTrust Advisors (Charlotte, NC; Paducah, KY); WealthTrust - DunckerStreett (St. Louis, MO); WealthTrust FBB (Bethesda, MD); WealthTrust - Kanawha Capital (Richmond, VA); WealthTrust - Arizona (Scottsdale, AZ); Delta Asset Management (Memphis, TN); Greenwood Capital Associates (Greenwood, SC); Harvey

Investment Company (Louisville, KY); Optimum Investment Advisors (Chicago, IL; San Francisco, CA); and Wilbanks, Smith & Thomas Asset Management (Richmond, VA).

"As our industry continues to undergo major shifts in product and service offerings, consolidation and institutionalization, our team and managers are confident that WealthTrust's unique platform, talented managers, and value-added capabilities position us well to serve our wealthy investor client base," said WealthTrust Chief Executive Officer, M. Rush "Rusty" Benton.

Circle Peak Capital and its capital partners backed Benton, who founded the company in 1997 and has over 20 years of asset management experience, and the existing WealthTrust management team, including General Counsel Michael K. Henry, Director of Business Development Robert T. (Tate) McDaniel, Vice President of Operations Eric L. Broder, and Controller Justin B. Hacker.

The Circle Peak Capital team, in addition to Managing Partner R. Adam Smith, was led by senior industry advisors Clinton J. Kendrick and H. Richard Vartabedian, Vice President Holbrook M. Forusz, and Senior Associate James H. Clippard. Mr. Kendrick is the former CEO and Founder of Matrix Global Investments, former Managing Director of Lehman Brothers, former CEO of Hyperion Capital Management, and the former President of Alliance Capital Management. Mr. Vartabedian has held CEO and CIO positions in asset management at HSBC and Chase Manhattan Bank, and is the former President of the Chase Vista Mutual Funds.

Deal advisors and service providers involved in the transaction include: Elizabeth Bloomer Nesvold of Cambridge International Partners Inc. (and her former firm, Berkshire Capital Securities LLC) and J. Greg Giffen of Harwell Howard Hyne Gabbert & Manner, who represented WealthTrust in its sale, and buy side advisors Daniel J. Eisner and Nigel S. Austin of Proskauer Rose LLP; Gregg H. Feinstein, Julie J. Levenson, James P. Murray, and Raymond J. Kane of Houlihan, Lokey, Howard and Zukin; Richard C. Lee and Miguel Sagarna of KPMG LLP; Schwartz & Company LLP; and Krauter & Company LLC.

Circle Peak Capital LLC

Circle Peak Capital LLC ("Circle Peak") is a private equity investment firm based in New York, NY and founded in 2002 that invests in or acquires established small- and mid-sized private companies in the consumer and asset management sectors, with a focus on building brands and sustainable competitive advantages. Circle Peak's principals and advisors are experienced in acquiring, managing, and building companies with between \$25 million and \$500 million in sales. Circle Peak's existing investment portfolio includes Luxury Optical Holdings LLC, Shari's Restaurants Management Corp, and Hill & Valley LLC.

Circle Peak is dedicated to partnering with proven management, building profitable businesses, and realizing significant returns on capital for its principals, management

teams and investors. For more information, go to www.circlepeakcapital.com, or call 646-230-8812.

WealthTrust, Inc.

WealthTrust, Inc. ("WealthTrust") is a Nashville, TN based strategic financial partner for U.S.-based investment counseling firms which provide comprehensive wealth management services to select families, individuals and public and private entities. WealthTrust currently has ownership interests in ten affiliated firms on a national basis, and collectively manages more than \$6.5 billion in assets. WealthTrust strengthens its affiliates by providing support and expertise in the areas of compliance, back office support, technology, operations, and client services, augmenting investment advisors' ability to focus on client-related objectives. For more information, go to www.wealthtrust.com, or call 615-297-6884.

SOURCE: Circle Peak Capital LLC