



Steve Rickman Joins Mercanti

Mandate to Build Software, Internet Infrastructure and eCommerce Practice

MINNEAPOLIS — July 29, 2003 (PRIMEZONE) — Significantly adding to its depth in investment banking for technology companies, The Mercanti Group announced today that Steve Rickman has joined the firm as a Managing Director. Rickman most recently served as Managing Director and Co-head of the Software and Internet Mergers and Acquisitions team for U.S. Bancorp Piper Jaffray.

Rickman teams with a select group of senior banking executives drawn from the ranks of major national and international firms that, through The Mercanti Group, are focused on providing strategic investment banking services to middle market companies and private equity firms in technology, consumer and retail, health care, manufacturing and services. At Mercanti, Rickman will concentrate on Software, Internet Marketing, eCommerce, and Technology Services companies. He also will focus on the firm's Health Care practice.

"Steve is incredibly talented and his depth of experience in technology and health care is a great fit for the needs we see in our marketplace," said James D'Aquila, managing director of The Mercanti Group. "Having worked with Steve during his days in investment banking for RBC Dain Rauscher, I am pleased to be rejoining with him in our focus on providing the highest level of banking services to small and middle market companies."

During his years with Piper Jaffray and RBC Dain Rauscher, Rickman's transaction experience encompassed cross-border and domestic mergers and acquisitions, restructurings, and capital raising including initial public and follow-on offerings, PIPEs and convertible debt. In the technology arena, his clients have included Alta Vista, Autodesk, Borland (youCentric), Buy.com, Digital Impact, Dreamworks, The Learning Company, Microsoft, Roxio and Vicinity. His healthcare and medical device experience includes work with such companies as Diametrics Medical, Orthologic, Possis Medical, Rochester Medical, Theragenics and Urologix.

Rickman earned an MS degree in Aeronautical Engineering from Stanford University and an MBA in Finance from the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota. Prior to his investment banking career he worked as an aeronautical engineer specializing in advanced jet fighter design.

About The Mercanti Group

The Mercanti Group is a results-oriented boutique financial advisory firm that embraces a fierce commitment to client service and provides creative Merger & Acquisition, Capital Raising and Strategic Advisory solutions to small and middle market companies, private equity firms and individual business owners in the consumer, health care, technology, software, business services and manufacturing industries. Over the last three decades, the professionals of Mercanti gained a wealth of Wall Street experience while they were partners to

The Mercanti Group

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gether at a few of the largest and most admired multi-national investment banks. Mercanti offers companies that are increasingly ignored by Wall Street the expertise and capabilities of a large investment bank with the focus, attention and energy of a small entrepreneurial firm. Mercanti Securities, LLC, member NASD/SIPC and a subsidiary of The Mercanti Group, enables Mercanti to compete with larger investment banks and provide a broad range of customized financial advisory services and transaction structures. Mercanti has offices in Minneapolis and Los Angeles. If you would like more information on The Mercanti Group, please visit the Web at www.mercantigroup.com, or contact a Mercanti professional at 612.333.0130 (Minneapolis) or 310.444.0130 (Los Angeles).

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