



NEWS RELEASE

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THE M&A ADVISOR ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF THE FOURTH ANNUAL U.S. MIDDLE-MARKET FINANCING AWARDS

NEW YORK, SEPT. 23, 2009 — *The M&A Advisor* today announced the recipients of the fourth annual U.S. Middle-Market Financing Awards. Award recipients were selected from three categories by an independent panel of judges representing a cross-section of the M&A industry.

Law firm Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP led the competition, receiving three awards:

- Media, Entertainment or Telecom Deal of the Year (Media Rights Capital's \$350 million credit facility),
- Energy Deal of the Year (El Paso Pipeline Partner's acquisition of assets from El Paso Corporation), and
- Financial Services Deal of the Year (acquisition of First Southwest Company by Plains Capital Corporation).

Founded in 1945, the firm has more than 800 lawyers in 13 offices. Nine offices are based in the U.S. while the other four Akin Gump international locations include London, Moscow, Abu Dhabi and Beijing.

Citi Capital Strategies captured Middle-Market M&A Financing Deal of the Year (leveraged recapitalization of Brook & Whittle, LTD) and Fifth Street Capital won the Debt Financing Agent of the Year. The Capital Strategies Group is an investment-banking group of Morgan Stanley Smith Barney. Fifth Street Finance Corp. is a bi-coastal specialty finance company that lends to and invests in small and mid-sized companies in connection with an investment by private equity sponsors.

“In these tough economic times we should applaud firms that have stepped up to the plate to make important middle market deals possible,” said Roger Aguinaldo, CEO of *The M&A Advisor*. “All middle-market financing award recipients—both multi-national boutique-sized—are true industry leaders and it is our honor to recognize them.”

This year there were a total of 51 finalists for the industry's fourth annual U.S. Middle-Market Financing Awards.

Finalists were divided into the following categories:

- Major Deals
- Sector Deals
- Agents/Firms/Products

Transactions had to close between April 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009 and have a transaction value of between \$10 million and \$1 billion.

The judges invited to jury this round of awards from *The M&A Advisor* are experienced industry professionals, including financial professionals, academics, consultants and service providers. Judges are volunteers and are not past or present employees of, or consultants to, *The M&A Advisor*. Also, they had no financial or business affiliation with the organization.

Judging is based on several criteria, including quantitative factors such as transaction value, impact on shareholder/company value and market share. Qualitative considerations include impact of transaction on the market/industry, ingenuity in structuring and/or negotiations, diligence and perseverance in consummating the deal and other unique attributes.

THE M&A ADVISOR

Since 1998, The M&A Advisor has been credited with being the preeminent organization facilitating connections and recognizing achievement in the top performers of the M&A, turnaround and financing industries through its leading events and awards galas, M&A Alerts newsletter and online community. For more information, go to www.maadvisor.com.

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***M&A Advisor* U.S. Middle-Market Financing Awards Recipients:**

Major Deal Categories:

Middle-Market M&A Financing Deal of the Year

Leveraged Recapitalization of Brook & Whittle, Ltd – Citi Capital Strategies

Debt Financing Deal of the Year

American Apparel Secured Second Lien Credit Facility – Financo Inc.

Equity Financing Deal of the Year

Common Stock Follow-on Offering/Confidential Accelerated Placement for Regal Beloit Corporation – **Robert W. Baird & Co.**

Deal-Maker of the Year

Steve McLaughlin – **FT Partners**

Distressed Financing Deal of the Year

Distressed Financing of Lyman Lumber Company – **Alliance Management**

Acquisition Financing Deal of the Year

Acquisition Financing of Food Services Company – **The PNC Financial Services Group, Inc.**

Sector Deal Categories:

Media, Entertainment, or Telecom Deal of the Year

Media Rights Capital’s \$350 million credit facility – **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP**

Energy Deal of the Year

El Paso Pipeline Partners’ acquisition of assets from El Paso Corporation – **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP**

Industrial Manufacturing/Distribution & Goods/Services

Common Stock Follow-on Offering/Confidential Accelerated Placement for Regal Beloit Corporation - **Robert W. Baird & Co.**

Real Estate Sector Deal

Formation of Private National Mortgage Acceptance Company, LLC – **Kramer Levin Naftalis & Frankel LLP**

Retail Manufacturing/Distribution & Goods/Services

Chapter 11 Reorganization of Hancock Fabrics, Inc. – **Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell LLP**

Financial Services Deal of the Year

Acquisition of First Southwest Company by Plains Capital Corporation – **Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP**

Agent/Firm/Product Categories:

Debt Financing Agent of the Year – Fifth Street Capital

Investment Banking Firm of the Year – Lincoln International LLC

Mezzanine Financing Agent of the Year – Golub Capital

Private Equity Sponsor of the Year – Insight Equity

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