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**ACE HARDWARE MAINTAINS TOP 10 SPOT IN BUSINESSWEEK'S
'CUSTOMER SERVICE CHAMPS' LIST**

Hardware Cooperative Ranks 10th in 3rd Annual List

OAK BROOK, Ill., March 3, 2009 – Ace Hardware has earned its moniker as the “helpful place,” according to *BusinessWeek*'s “Customer Service Champs” ranking published in the March 2 edition of the magazine. Ace earned the 10th spot on the list for the second year in a row.

Ace is the only home improvement retailer in the top 10 on the 2009 list. Amazon.com ranked first. To qualify, each company must have at least \$1 billion in annual revenue.

“Our retailers have always provided top-notch service to their customers,” said Ray Griffith, president and chief executive officer of Ace Hardware Corp. “These entrepreneurs have the support and strength of a strong national brand while localizing their businesses to meet the needs of the community.”

According to the magazine, market researcher J.D. Power & Associates, which has ranked Ace first in its class for customer satisfaction, gathered data that *BusinessWeek*, a sister company, analyzed along with responses to a survey distributed to some 5,000 magazine readers. Editors then combined data and took into account differences between sectors when compiling the overall ranking.

The magazine referenced ways in which Ace has cut costs but maintained service levels. Specifically, Ace now employs technology that helps store managers determine the best times to stock shelves and clean restrooms based on past shopping patterns. Additionally, thanks to call center consolidations, Ace has been able to expand customer service hours later in the evening and longer on the weekend.

“We’re proud that a prestigious publication like *BusinessWeek* has recognized our efforts,” continued Griffith. “Our retailers and store associates work hard to ensure their customers receive the helpful hardware advice they need.”

Since 2005, Ace has experienced the largest expansion in its 85-year history. Ace has opened 420 new stores in the United States over the last three years. With more than 4,600 neighborhood hardware stores, 50 percent of the U.S. population is within three miles of an Ace store – a statistic showing both expansiveness and yet considerable room for further domestic growth.

BusinessWeek is a weekly magazine that delivers important news that affects the business community in the U.S. and abroad.

About Ace Hardware

Throughout its 85-year history, Ace Hardware has been known as the helpful hardware store by both customers and communities. Last year, Ace ranked “Highest in Customer Satisfaction among Home Improvement Stores for the Second Consecutive Year,” according to J.D. Power and Associates. With 4,600 hardware, home center and building materials stores that generate annual retail sales of approximately \$12 billion, Ace is the largest retailer-owned hardware cooperative in the industry. Headquartered in Oak Brook, Ill., Ace currently operates 14 distribution centers in the U.S. and one in Shanghai, China, and its retailers' stores are located in all 50 states and more than 60 countries. For more information on Ace, visit www.acehardware.com.

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