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**ACE HARDWARE MAINTAINS TOP 10 SPOT IN BLOOMBERG
BUSINESSWEEK'S 'CUSTOMER SERVICE CHAMPS' LIST**
Hardware Cooperative Ranks 10th in 3rd Annual List

OAK BROOK, Ill., February 25, 2010 – Ace Hardware has again been named one of *Bloomberg BusinessWeek's* top “Customer Service Champs.” Ace earned the 10th spot on the list for the third consecutive year, further confirming its moniker as “the helpful place.” The ranking will be published in the March 1 edition of the magazine.

Ace is the only home improvement retailer to place in the top 10 on the 2010 list. L.L. Bean ranked first. To qualify, each company must have at least \$1 billion in annual revenue.

“Our stores 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 *Bloomberg BusinessWeek* 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 invested in the customer experience. Specifically, Ace doubled its mystery shopping program to include 1,300 more of its 4,500 stores. Further, the company employs technology that helps store

managers and owners reference data on essential inventory stocking levels. This helps drive sales and allows in-store employees to focus primarily on customer service instead of making ordering decisions.

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

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

About Ace Hardware

For more than 85 years, Ace Hardware has been known as the helpful hardware store by both customers and communities. In 2009, Ace ranked “Highest in Customer Satisfaction among Home Improvement Stores for the Third Consecutive Year,” according to J.D. Power and Associates. With 4,500 locally owned and operated hardware, home center and building materials stores, Ace is the largest 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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