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ACE HARDWARE NAMED 6th LARGEST FRANCHISE OPERATION

OAK BROOK, Ill., November 2, 2011 – Ace Hardware Corporation is ranked the sixth largest franchise operation in the world in the recently released 2011 *Franchise Times* Top 200™ Franchise Systems list. The largest retailer cooperative in the convenience hardware industry, Ace Hardware has held a position in the top six each year since its debut on the list in 2005.

The 12th annual compilation of the list ranked Ace sixth based on its retailers annual worldwide retail sales in 2010, estimated to be \$12.5 billion. Ranking ahead of Ace in the top six are other household names that include McDonald's, 7-Eleven, KFC, Subway and Burger King. Ace is the only hardware/home improvement retailer on the list.

“To be consistently ranked in the top six by *Franchise Times* is a testament to Ace's ability to year-after-year attract new investors and motivate current retailers to open additional stores,” said Kane Calamari, vice president of retail operations and new business for Ace Hardware. “Our co-op business model actually offers all of the benefits of a franchise, while still inspiring and encouraging entrepreneurialism among our retailers through growth initiatives and incentives.”

The 2011 *Franchise Times* list reports that franchising “returned as an economic bright spot” in 2010, with the 200 largest systems experiencing total sales growth of 6.3 percent on an adjusted basis.

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About Ace Hardware

For more than 85 years, Ace Hardware has been known as the helpful hardware store in thousands of communities across America. Customers depend on Ace to help them take care of their homes quickly and easily so they can get on with their lives. In 2011, Ace ranked “Highest in Customer Satisfaction among Home Improvement Stores for the Fifth Consecutive Year,” according to J.D. Power and Associates. With 4,500 locally owned and operated hardware 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. It also has distribution capabilities in Shanghai, China; Panama City, Panama; and Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Its retailers' stores are located in all 50 states and more than 60 countries. For more information on Ace, visit www.acehardware.com.