

CONTACT: Erin Kane or Tara Peitzer
L.C. Williams & Associates
800-837-7123 or 312-565-3900
ekane@lcwa.com or tpeitzer@lcwa.com

Christopher Boniface
Ace Hardware Corp.
630-990-6446
cboni@acehardware.com

**ACE HARDWARE MAKES 13 ITS LUCKY NUMBER
IN CUSTOMER SERVICE SURVEY**

*'Real People' Survey Ranks Ace at Head of Home Improvement Help
for 13 Consecutive Quarters*

OAK BROOK, Ill., September 2, 2008 – Ace Hardware again lived up to its reputation as the “The Helpful Place” in 2008, receiving top honors for its excellent customer service from Corporate Research International (CRI). For the past 13 consecutive quarters, CRI has ranked Ace Hardware number one in the home improvement retail category based on the results of its “Real People Ratings” consumer opinion survey.

For the second quarter of 2008, Ace topped the charts with a 7.96 rating. Ace has ranked at the top of its category since the survey began in April 2005.

CRI, a market research firm specializing in mystery shopping and customer satisfaction surveys, compiles each quarter’s survey via RealPeopleRatings.com. The company sends the quarterly online opinion polls to its pool of mystery shoppers, who rate their perception of each business’ customer service on a scale from one to 10, with 10 being the highest rating.

“We’re proud of our 4,600 retailers who provide their customers exceptional, helpful service day-in, day-out,” said Ray Griffith, president and chief executive officer of Ace Hardware Corp. “Ace stores are committed to being ‘the helpful place’ in every community they serve, and ranking first for the 13th consecutive quarter reflects their dedication to always go the extra mile for customers.”

- more -

REAL PEOPLE RATINGS – Add One

“The results of this survey have important implications because they reflect the everyday consumer’s perception of each establishment rated,” said Michael Mallett, president and CEO of Corporate Research International. “Ace’s 13 consecutive first place rankings show their continued focus on customer satisfaction year after year.”

Other first-place customer service winners include Chipotle Mexican Grill in the fast food category; Olive Garden in the full-service restaurants category; Speedway in the convenience stores category; Dick’s Sporting Goods in the sporting goods category; Best Buy in the electronics category; and Nordstrom in the department stores category.

Corporate Research International specializes in mystery shopping services and interactive consumer voice and Web response surveys. Founded in 1989 in Findlay, Ohio, the company was named to the 2005 and 2006 *Inc.* 500 list of fastest growing private companies. For more information on CRI, please visit www.corpri.com.

Throughout its 84-year history, Ace Hardware has been known as the helpful place by both customers and communities. With 4,600 hardware, home center and building materials stores that generate annual retail sales of more than \$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 a warehouse in Shanghai, China. Ace retailers’ stores are located in all 50 states and more than 60 countries. More information about Ace can be found at www.acehardware.com.

###