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### **ACE HARDWARE APPOINTS NEW LEADERSHIP IN FINANCE, RETAIL SUPPORT**

OAK BROOK, Ill., Dec. 3, 2008 – Leading hardware cooperative Ace Hardware Corporation has hired Rick Affolter to serve as vice president of finance and has promoted Rick Whitson to vice president of retail support.

Affolter, 54, will be responsible for day-to-day operations of Ace's finance department and will oversee the company's controller, tax director and director of financial planning and analysis. He joins Ace from HD Supply, Inc., a wholesale distributor of construction and maintenance products, which The Home Depot sold in 2007 and where he served as a director of finance. He earned his bachelor's degree in finance from Northern Illinois University and a master's in business administration from the Lake Forest School of Management. Affolter will report to Ace's Chief Financial Officer Dorvin Lively.

"Rick has a long and successful track record in finance and accounting," said Lively. "He brings expertise in strategic planning, operations analysis and financial reporting processes and procedures to Ace."

Whitson, 55, is a 29-year veteran of Ace. In his new role he will direct activities at Ace's 14 retail distribution support centers and six cross dock facilities. Most recently, Whitson served as director of retail support and engineering, for which he will continue to provide leadership.

Throughout Whitson's career at Ace, where he started as a warehouse supervisor, he has participated in the initial start-up of three major distribution centers and directed retail support in the Midwest region.

Whitson graduated from Elmhurst College with a degree in psychology. He will report to Rita Kahle, Ace's executive vice president.

"Rick's distribution expertise and long history at Ace is invaluable to us," said Kahle. "He will bring on-the-ground experience and trusted leadership to this position."

## **Additional Retail Support Appointments**

In addition to Whitson's promotion, there are two other changes to Ace's retail support leadership team.

Tim Rignell, 55, who most recently served as retail support manager, has been promoted to director of retail support for the Midwest region. In this role, he will oversee operations at the LaCrosse, Wis., and Princeton, Ill., retail support centers and the Chicago cross dock.

Scott Zirlin, 60, director of retail support for the Northeast region, will assume responsibility for overseeing the Toledo, Ohio, distribution center and the cross dock located in Cleveland in addition to facilities in New York, Virginia and Maryland he already leads.

Rignell and Zirlin will report to Whitson, in addition to directors Lon McAnally, Ron McClinton and Don Zimmerman, who lead distribution centers and facilities in other regions of the country.

"This new leadership ensures we will continue to serve our retailers' needs as we expedite product to market," said Whitson. "Both Tim and Scott have a long history with Ace as well and understand the importance of accurate and on-time inventory management and shipment."

## **About Ace Hardware**

Throughout its 84-year history, Ace Hardware has been known as the helpful hardware store by both customers and communities. This 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 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 one in Shanghai, China, and its retailers' stores are located in all 50 states and 60 countries. For more information on Ace, visit [www.acehardware.com](http://www.acehardware.com).

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