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Fahlgren, Edward Howard to Join Public Relations Businesses

Alignment Forms Independent Powerhouse: Largest Firm in Ohio and Top 30 Nationally

COLUMBUS, Ohio and CLEVELAND, Ohio (January 13, 2010) – The Board of Directors of Fahlgren, Inc., one of the nation's top independent communications companies, and majority shareholders of Edward Howard & Co., the nation's longest-established independent public relations firm, announced today that Fahlgren will acquire Edward Howard & Co. The acquisition, which joins the capabilities of Fahlgren Mortine Public Relations and Edward Howard, is expected to close during the first quarter of 2010 although integration and coordinated new business and marketing efforts will begin immediately. Both brand names, which individually represent excellence in public relations, will remain. Financial terms of the deal will not be disclosed.

The combination of Fahlgren Mortine Public Relations and Edward Howard creates a premier public relations business serving clients based in more than 25 states. The joined public relations business includes more than 60 staff members located in Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton and Toledo in Ohio, and Atlanta; Denver; Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; and, Parkersburg, W. Va. It is projected to generate approximately \$10 million in revenue in 2010.

The agency will be headquartered in Columbus and led by Neil Mortine, president of Fahlgren Mortine Public Relations, and CEO of Fahlgren, Inc. Kathy Cupper Obert, formerly chairman and chief executive of Edward Howard, will become president of Edward Howard and assume the role of managing director of Fahlgren, Inc. Wayne Hill, formerly president of Edward Howard, will serve as executive vice president of Edward Howard. Both Obert and Hill will serve on the Fahlgren, Inc. management team.

"Edward Howard is a firm that we have long admired for its expertise, capabilities and reputation as a foremost public relations business," Mortine said. "The relationship between the two firms has always been filled with respect and admiration; today, the competitive spirit is joined to aggressively pursue regional and national growth. The joined public relations businesses will thrive on winning as a powerhouse independent public relations and marketing communications firm that leverages the expertise and resources of both companies and Fahlgren Advertising. This is the right time for this acquisition because as the economy continues to rebound, we're seeing increased demand for public relations partners that can deliver cost-effective, responsive and measurable communications services."

Kathy Cupper Obert of Edward Howard, added, "This is good for clients, employees and the future. We have been talking on and off for several years with Fahlgren executives about the opportunities and benefits that could result from bringing our two firms together. Now is the right time. Equipped with the full spectrum of capabilities in both digital and traditional communication, we are an attractive partner for businesses requiring highly responsive attention from experienced counselors at reasonable costs. We're large enough to get the job done but small enough to care. That's why what we're building together is compelling as an independent, national public relations agency based in the Midwest."

Areas of service between the companies are complementary while new capabilities augment the businesses' ability to serve clients with a wider and deeper range of communication services in a coordinated, comprehensive way. The merged business is equipped with deep knowledge within numerous industry groups such as business-to-business, consumer packaged goods, economic and civic

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development, financial services, healthcare, retail, travel and leisure, and technology. Capabilities include the full spectrum of marketing communications services with comprehensive practice area expertise in crisis, financial, internal, litigation and marketing communications, analyst, investor and media relations, social media, public affairs, and environmental responsibility, among many others.

The combined revenue of the two public relations businesses is expected to place the firm in the top 30 among *PR Week* magazine's annual agency rankings. Fahlgren Mortine, which has grown an average of 22 percent annually for the past six years, was ranked number 70 on the 2009 *PR Week* list. Using the same list, the business will be the largest independent public relations firm in Ohio and among the top five in the Midwest.

About Fahlgren, Inc.

Columbus, Ohio-based Fahlgren, Inc. is one of the nation's top independent communications agencies employing 125 communications professionals in six states. Fahlgren, Inc. serves regional and national clients through two business units: Fahlgren Advertising and Fahlgren Mortine Public Relations. For more information, please visit www.fahlgren.com and www.fahlgrenmortine.com.

About Edward Howard

Edward Howard leverages the power of communication for its clients, helping them achieve their goals by telling their stories, protecting their reputations, selling their products and growing their value. The firm's specialty is solving complex communication challenges. Founded in 1925, Ohio-based Edward Howard serves clients throughout the United States. For more information, visit www.edwardhoward.com.

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Editor's note: Hi-res photos of agency executives and logos are available upon request.

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