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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**The Independent Carton Group Celebrates Thirty Years**

*Two Directors Honored with Emeritus Titles, Vendor of the Year Award Presented, Directors, Members and Vendors Recognized During Two-Day Celebration and Membership Meeting*

**NEWTOWN, CONN., MARCH 22, 2013** – The Independent Carton Group (ICG), an association of 17 independently owned and operated folding carton companies, celebrated its 30th anniversary with a host of special events that unfolded over the past two days in Charleston, S.C., including the presentation of several esteemed awards. For three decades, the ICG has helped independent folding carton manufacturers successfully compete against large, integrated paper companies in the folding carton industry, and today, the 17 member companies in 11 states collectively represent over \$700 million in annual sales and 1,282 years of packaging history.

**Celebrating Thirty Years**

Members from across the nation gathered in Charleston to commemorate the anniversary with a special celebration that coincided with the group's general membership meeting. Events included a private tour of the Kraft paper mill owned by KapStone Paper and Packaging, an ICG vendor since 2002, a historic carriage tour experience, and a gourmet Mediterranean meal at Sermet's.

A highlight of the dinner at Sermet's was the recognition of long-standing ICG board members Andrew Willie and Charles Hirsh, who were honored with emeritus titles for their 30 years of dedicated and distinguished service to the ICG and their contributions to the packaging industry.

- Andrew Willie's background includes 32 years at Curtis Packaging. He joined Curtis at age 28, moved up the ranks, then led the company as co-owner and general manager from 1981 until 1991. He is one of the ICG's founding members. Willie recently stepped down as executive director, but as executive director emeritus and president of the ICG, LLC, he continues to lend his 54 years of experience and wisdom to the ICG and the industry.
- In 1951, Charles Hirsh began working at Accurate Box, a company founded by his father, Henry, in 1944. He took over the family business in 1964 and successfully grew it over 33 years before passing the torch to his daughter Lisa. He served on the ICG's board of directors since its founding, and though Hirsh recently stepped down, he remains active in the ICG as director emeritus and in the packaging industry he has served for 62 years.

During the general membership meeting held at the historic Francis Marion Hotel yesterday, the ICG presented its vendor of the year award to Clearwater Paper Corporation. Clearwater Paper

has been an ICG vendor since 2002, and this is the second consecutive year it has been named vendor of the year. Dan Johansen and Robert Collins were present to receive the award.

The ICG also took the opportunity to publicly thank Bruce Wnuk of Agfa Graphics and John McKay, previously of Pitman, an Agfa company, during the celebration. Wnuk and McKay both played significant roles in orchestrating the first vendor arrangement through the ICG's buying consortium in 1999. Agfa Graphics remains the ICG's longest running designated vendor today.

And finally, the ICG recognized Patricia Peterson of All Packaging, an ICG member, with an award for her tremendous dedication to coordinating the ICG's technical conferences. Peterson has planned and executed 13 technical conferences over the past eight years for ICG members.

Also present at the events were current and founding member companies Curtis Packaging, Dee Paper Box and Zumbiel Packaging. Robert Zumbiel is the only founding member that still holds an ICG leadership role as a member of the board of directors, a post he has held since the group's inception. The current board also includes Jay Willie, its executive director, Kenneth Pepper of All Packaging, James Hamilton of Colbert Packaging and James Hodges of Royal Paper Box.

### **Shared Values and Goals**

The ICG was created when the owners of five independent folding carton companies met at LaGuardia Airport to discuss how they could help each other through operational disruptions such as strikes and natural disasters as well as equipment and material supply issues. While this production continuity assurance was the impetus for the ICG's founding in 1982 – and was quite notably called into play as recently as 2005 when a fire destroyed a member's manufacturing plant – by 1999, members had also joined together to form a buying consortium. Today, the ICG negotiates contracts through this consortium with over 20 reputable vendors to capture volume discounts like those enjoyed by the larger, integrated packaging companies. The ICG also offers educational and networking events that support members and enable them to support each other.

“It's amazing to think that such incredible vision came out of a meeting of competitors held tentatively and cautiously at an airport so many years ago,” said Jay Willie, executive director of the Independent Carton Group. “The ICG's vibrant collection of members has proven the viability and the power of working together as a cohesive and interactive group – all while protecting each company's competitive independence. In fact, the ICG has become a template for success, quite clearly demonstrating how ‘the little guy’ has the same chance of profitable survival as ‘the big guy’ simply by banding together based on our shared values and goals.”

Environmental stewardship values and goals shared by ICG members were recently visible in the ICG-sponsored energy efficiency program with Efficient Lighting Consultants. This program inspired ICG members and vendors to implement energy-efficient lighting in their manufacturing facilities, warehouses and offices. Program participants are collectively saving \$1,871,806 in electricity costs and reducing greenhouse gas emissions by over 18.1 million pounds annually.

ICG members are independently owned and operated folding carton manufacturers. Most are family-owned and have been for generations. None are affiliated with a major paper mill. They are known for their flexibility, responsiveness and personal service, driven by lean organizations

and transparent management. Members include Accord Carton, Accurate Box, All Packaging, Climax Manufacturing, Colbert Packaging, Curtis Packaging, 3C Packaging, Dee Paper Box, Diamond Packaging, Disc Graphics, El Paso Paper Box, Finn Industries, Metro Packaging and Imaging, Royal Paper Box, Sonderen Packaging, Thoro Packaging and Zumbiel Packaging.

Learn more about the Independent Carton Group at [www.independentcartongroup.com](http://www.independentcartongroup.com).

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