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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**Independent Carton Group Technical Conferences Promote Learning and Sharing**

*14 Technical Conferences Held in the Past 8 Years have Delivered Timely and Relevant Educational Value and Networking Opportunities for Packaging Production Employees*

**NEWTOWN, CONN., JULY 17, 2013** – The Independent Carton Group (ICG), an association of 17 independently owned and operated folding carton companies, recently wrapped up its 14<sup>th</sup> semiannual technical conference, which featured a great lineup of speakers and high attendance, as has been the case with the group’s past conferences. ICG technical conferences have increased in frequency over the past eight years, and each conference delivers timely and relevant educational value that benefits ICG members and, ultimately, their customers.

“We have a wealth of programs that empower our members to support each other and better serve their customers,” said Jay Willie, executive director of the Independent Carton Group. “If a member faces operational disruption, our production continuity program is called into action to ensure order fulfillment. Our group purchasing program saves members money on equipment, paperboard, ink and other supplies, and creates a ripple effect with members passing the savings on to their customers. And these technical conferences provide a forum where members come together to learn from industry experts and from one another, and network with their peers.”

While the ICG holds regular meetings for its board members and general membership meetings for its members’ executives, technical conferences are designed specifically for the members’ production-level employees. Like the general membership meetings, the technical conferences are typically hosted by a member company or an ICG-approved vendor and include a facility tour and various networking opportunities. All technical conferences are educational in nature, and each one focuses on a specific packaging-related topic of interest to ICG members.

Last month’s conference – “The Papermaking Process and Characteristics of Various Board Types” – included presentations on different types of paperboard as well as a valuable primer on troubleshooting the converting challenges related to paperboard variations. It was held at the Lewiston, Idaho-based paper mill of Clearwater Paper and featured speakers from Clearwater Paper, Dura-Fibre, Hazen Paper, MeadWestvaco and Rock-Tenn. It was attended by those in production, purchasing, customer service and similar roles at ICG member companies.

Past technical conferences have focused on everything from industry regulations, to inks and special effects, to die cutting and gluing, to techniques for increasing run speeds and reducing waste. They have been held all over the country, with each conference featuring a new venue and

speaker lineup. And while each is tailored to a different group of employees within ICG member companies, most are designed for those employees involved in day-to-day packaging operations.

“These conferences are for the employees ‘in the trenches,’ those operating presses, handling paperboard, mixing inks, setting up jobs for production, ensuring quality, and so on. Attendees benefit from insight they receive during the conference, reference materials they take home and connections they make,” said Patricia Peterson, a 22-year veteran of the packaging industry and a production manager for All Packaging, an ICG member. “I’m always so pleased to see the learning that occurs during these conferences, the knowledge and confidence attendees gain, but I’m just as pleased to see camaraderie and good fellowship, and new friendships being formed.”

Peterson says the conferences are successful because they are planned by the attendees for the attendees. Each technical conference is organized by a committee of people from different ICG member companies. Peterson oversees conference planning and execution, a role she volunteered for eight years ago because she recognized both a void in the industry for technical packaging-related education and the ICG’s unique position to be able to fill this void for its members.

She also stresses the rules surrounding the conferences. Although speakers are often from ICG vendor companies, anything even resembling a sales pitch or a customer or pricing disclosure is strictly forbidden. In addition to speaker presentations, committee members lead roundtable discussions that enable attendees to present and discuss their own real-world scenarios, solicit feedback from experts and peers, and both expand and share their knowledge base.

“These conferences are a nod to the ICG’s founding fathers who, over three decades ago, made it possible for us to come together as a sharing group, one with a desire to improve operations and serve customers better,” said Willie. “Every day, our members – and their customers – see the result of our founders’ leap of faith, and the strength of our sharing group in action.”

### **About Independent Carton Group**

The Independent Carton Group (ICG) is an association of independently owned and operated folding carton companies. The ICG helps its members provide exceptional products, service and pricing to their customers through group purchasing, supply assurance, educational and networking programs. ICG 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. For more information about the Independent Carton Group, visit [www.independentcartongroup.com](http://www.independentcartongroup.com).

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