



CASTLEOAK SECURITIES HIRES MUNICIPAL FINANCE AND SALES AND TRADING TEAM

New York, NY - February 16, 2011 – CastleOak Securities, L.P., a leading New York-based boutique investment firm, today announced the hiring of a team of six municipal finance and institutional sales and trading specialists. The team, headed by Eric Small, Nick Potonak and William Matlock served as the core of the public finance team of former Cleveland-based firm SBK-Brooks Investment Corp. For fifteen years, SBK-Brooks ranked as one of the largest minority owned investment banking firms in public finance and institutional brokerages. The addition of the new hires further strengthens CastleOak’s growing finance capabilities. Just last month, CastleOak announced the appointment of Donna Sims Wilson, formerly President of M.R. Beal & Company, as executive vice president.

Mr. Small has been named Senior Managing Director while Messrs. Potonak and Matlock have been named Managing Directors. The team is rounded out by Matthew Middendorf and Gregory Reynolds, who join CastleOak as Directors in the firm’s public finance group; and, Jonathan Ly who has been hired as the group’s Financial Analyst.

“The fact that we are able to attract professionals of their caliber and experience from SBK Brooks underscores our ambition and capability of meeting the needs of our growing client base,” said David Jones, President and CEO of CastleOak Securities. “We have sought for some time to add public finance capabilities to our platform. I am confident that their strong record of outstanding client service and buy-side experience will contribute to the continuing expansion of our fixed income business.”

CastleOak's new public finance team will be based in offices in the Midwest, but will service the firm's nationwide client base.

Eric Small, who will be based in Cleveland and Chicago, has 30 years of broad-based capital markets experience. Having served as lead banker for over \$2 billion dollars in municipal transactions, he brings significant municipal debt offerings experience to CastleOak. Prior to SBK, Mr. Small was a senior investment director with the Bond Investment Department of Aetna Life & Casualty. He taught economics and finance as an Adjunct Professor with the Levin Graduate School of Urban Studies at Cleveland State University. He holds a Bachelor of Science in finance from the McDounough School of Business at Georgetown University and a Master of Science in Management from the Arthur D. Little School of Management.

Warren Nicholas "Nick" Potonak, who will be based in Cleveland, joins the firm with 28 years of institutional sales experience in taxable and tax-exempt bonds. Prior to SBK, he managed the fixed income sales desk for Tucker Anthony Inc. Mr. Potonak holds a BA in Economics and is completing his MBA at John Carroll University.

William Matlock, who will be based in Columbus, Ohio, has over 25 years experience in both public and private sector investments as well as treasury and debt management. While serving as the Deputy Director of Investments and Debt Management with the State of Ohio Treasury, he was responsible for investment operations in excess of \$9 billion and managed bond issues in excess of \$1.3 billion. Mr. Matlock has a BBA in Accounting and Financial Management from Cleveland State University.

Matthew Middendorf, who will be based in Cleveland, served as the primary liaison between SBK and institutional clients with over 15 years of experience in both the taxable and tax-exempt markets focusing primarily on municipal and agency securities. In addition, he was in charge of coordinating SBK's trading and research. Mr. Middendorf began his career with

National City Bank as a money market trader and is a graduate from Kent State University with a BBA in Finance.

Gregory Reynolds, who will be based in Indianapolis, has eleven years of institutional capital markets experience. He holds an MBA from the University of Chicago and an engineering degree from North Carolina State University.

Jonathan Ly, senior analyst who will be based in Chicago, was a consultant with and headed training at Ferrand Consulting Group, Inc. Mr. Ly was an investment banker with KeyBank Capital Markets and was a senior analyst at Chapman and Cutler. He graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago with dual B.A. degrees in economics and finance.

About CastleOak Securities

CastleOak is a New York based boutique investment bank with regional offices throughout the U.S. It is managed by a team of seasoned bankers with an average of over 20 years of experience. CastleOak provides sales and trading, capital markets, and financial advisory services. The company offers expertise in primary and secondary market transactions, and is structured to effectively advise its clients on mergers, acquisitions, divestitures, valuations and general strategic assessments.

CastleOak is in a strategic partnership with Cantor Fitzgerald, L.P., a leading global financial services provider to the institutional equity and fixed income capital markets.

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