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**Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce Recognizes area
Employers for their exemplary Workplace Practices**

*Nine organizations in Rochester to be awarded the prestigious national
Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility*

Rochester, Minn. (July 23, 2009) – The current recession – considered one of the worst since the Great Depression in the 1930s – is proving to be a “game changer” for organizations in all sectors of the economy. A study conducted by the Families and Work Institute in May 2009 found that most companies (81%) are maintaining the workplace flexibility they offer during the recession and another 13% are increasing it. The question remains: to what extent are employers able to continue be good places for employees to work while dealing with these very difficult business survival issues?

The winners of the Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility offer a unique picture of organizations that are finding this middle ground. “From new forms of flexible work arrangements that minimize lay-offs, to creative cost-cutting that retains core medical benefits, to providing financial information and support to employees, these employers are braving the economic storm through innovative policies that prevent undue shock to their workplaces and their employees,” said Ellen Galinsky, president of the Families and Work Institute.

The Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility, to be presented locally by the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce at ceremony on **Tuesday, Aug. 4 from 7:30 – 9 a.m. at the Rochester International Event Center**, recognize organizations that are striving to find new ways to make work “work” in today’s difficult economy. These prestigious national awards honor organizations of all sizes and all types in the Rochester area and across the country that are using workplace flexibility as a strategy to increase workplace effectiveness and yield positive business results. Patricia Kempthorne of Georgetowne Law’s Workplace Flexibility 2010 policy team will provide a keynote address and moderate a local award winner panel. The ceremony is open to the community, yet registration is required by calling 507-288-1122.

Local winners of the 2009 Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility are:

- Cardinal of Minnesota, Ltd. (2-year winner)
- Custom Alarm/Custom Communications, Inc. (2-year winner)
- First Alliance Credit Union (2-year winner)
- Rochester Area Family YMCA
- Rochester Community and Technical College (2008 honorable mention)
- Senior Citizens Services, Inc.
- Southern Minnesota Municipal Power Agency
- United Way of Olmsted County (2008 honorable mention)
- Venture Computer Systems (2-year winner)

Honorable Mention: Express Employment Professionals

“The Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce is honored to recognize nine of our local business members who are paving the way in workforce innovation,” says John Wade, president of the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce. “The 2009 Sloan Awards affirm our commitment to workplace flexibility as one strategic way an organization can provide the agility and sustainability needed to support a talented workforce in a constantly changing marketplace.”

The Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility are part of the *When Work Works* project, an ongoing initiative of Families and Work Institute, the Institute for a Competitive Workforce (an affiliate of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce), and the Twiga Foundation. Through *When Work Works*, these partner organizations provide research, resources, and recognition to employers nationwide. The project shares the results of research on creating effective and flexible workplaces that meet the needs of the 21st century.

Each of the 2009 Sloan Award winners will also be recognized nationally and will be featured in next year's edition of the *Guide to Bold New Ideas for Making Work Work*, published by Families and Work Institute.

Rochester is one of 30 select communities nationwide chosen to host and participate in the *When Work Works* initiative, with the Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce leading the local initiative. Other communities participating in 2009 are: Arizona (statewide); Atlanta, GA; Aurora, CO; Birmingham, AL; Boise, ID; Charleston, SC; Chicago, IL; Columbus, OH; Dallas, TX; Dayton, OH; Durham, NC; Houston, TX; Kentucky (statewide); Long Beach, CA; Long Island, NY; Louisville, KY; Manchester, NH; Melbourne-Palm Bay, FL; Michigan (statewide); Milwaukee, WI; Morris County, NJ; Providence, RI; Richmond, VA; Salt Lake City, UT; Savannah, GA; Seattle, WA; Spokane, WA; Twin Cities, St. Cloud and Winona.

For more information about *When Work Works* or the Alfred P. Sloan Awards, please contact Jess Ihrke, vice president, education/workforce development, Rochester Area Chamber of Commerce, at 507-424-5678 or jlhrke@rochestermnchamber.com.