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UPTOWN Professional Honors World Pac Paper's Chief Officer with the 2014 Cincinnati Trailblazer Award

CINCINNATI, OH (June 19, 2014) On Thursday, June 19, 2014, nearly 100 guests, including CEOs, top corporate executives, professionals and friends of the business community gathered at The Grand Hall in the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center (NURFC) in Cincinnati, Ohio for the Catalysts Awards Reception. The Catalyst Awards, including the special individual awards: Humanitarian, Trailblazer and Legacy Awards were presented at this event. This special reception provided the opportunity to honor the 2014 Trailblazer Award recipient, World Pac Paper's Founder, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, Edgar L. Smith, Jr. The event was Co-Presented by Len Burnett, Jr. – Co-CEO of UPTOWN Ventures Group and Robert Ingram-Publisher of UPTOWN Professional Magazine. Corporate sponsors for the evening included Macy's, Fifth Third Bank, Cintas and Tiffany. Len Burnett and Robert Ingram provided insights on the Catalyst Award & Trailblazer Award winning initiatives and requirements. "Success is not just based upon ones own individual efforts and what the awardees tonight celebrate is just that." said Len Burnett. Robert Ingram said his publication "celebrates great people doing great things at great companies." He went on to say, the awards reception was being held in "an architecturally substantial building. The NURFC is an iconic structure that holds the voices of so many and it is fitting to shout and celebrate the triumphs of these individuals in such a setting." Bridget Patton, Director of Community Affairs for the Office of the Mayor of Cincinnati, spoke on behalf of Mayor John Cranley. She said "Cincinnati is increasingly becoming known for diversity and it is home of nine Fortune 500 companies." State Representative Alicia Reece (D) of Ohio House District 33 was also on hand to show her continued support of business and businesses helping minority businesses grow. She stated "we are at a time when we need positive role models and for the young to see those who lead the way, we are grateful to UPTOWN Professional Magazine for coming to Cincinnati and that their impact is global." Leading companies including Macy's, The Procter & Gamble Company, The Kroger Company, Macy's Inc., Cintas, Fifth Third Bank, YUM! Brands and Cardinal Health were each honored, through their executive representatives, for their work and efforts in the area of multicultural advancement and creating inclusive workplace cultures, environments and policies. World Pac Paper's CEO received the lone award for an entrepreneur, the *Trailblazer Award*.

The Trailblazer Award honors a person who has emerged on the scene and blazed new trails in a given industry discipline or craft. Edgar Smith, as the Chief Executive at World Pac Paper, has lead the strategic direction and planning of this global distributor of high-quality printing & packaging papers and packaging solutions since its inception. The innovative initiatives of the company have placed it on a forward path towards continued growth and success. With a strong business model and platform, this customer focused market-leading company has provided wonderful product solutions to the companies and the corporations they serve. Mr. Smith, an African American, is a paper, print and packaging industry veteran, who founded his company at a time when very little diversity was present within those various industries.

There was and remains a very few minorities in general, and African Americans in particular, in management and C-Suite levels within these industries. Edgar Smith has led the landscape by creating an innovative firm and educates the capabilities of minorities within his industry by his presence and exemplary company performance.

The positive impact Edgar Smith and his company have had on the Greater Cincinnati region is also very notable. This Chief Executive is an avid community volunteer and he sits on numerous non-profit and educational boards locally and nationally. He encourages his company to support the community in which it sits and to be a contributing part of a vibrant community. His involvement in the arts, educational institutions, civic organizations and regional business groups ranges from board member to leading the country's largest united arts fund community arts campaign in 2012, raising over \$11 million for local arts organizations, serving as a Trustee at Union Institute and University, Marietta College, heading the regional Red Cross Board as the first African American (2006-2008) to Chair the Board of Directors for the American Red Cross-Cincinnati Area Chapter, a top chapter in the US, to taking the lead as the Presenting Sponsor, for the past four years, of one of the regions highlight cultural events-the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra's (CSO) Classical Roots, which celebrates the power and influences of the multitude of African American music. This seminal event features the world renown CSO with a 150 person mass community choir comprised from 50 local African American churches. The positive impact this annual event has had on bringing new and diverse audiences to the CSO and the new and inspirational experience of the event for the African American audience is remarkable. Edgar Smith said of his award, "I am so proud to be honored with this award and to be an inspiration for others, and to provide leadership and paths for others to follow. We do it with and through others."

About UPTOWN Professional Magazine

Launched in 2011, UPTOWN Professional Magazine is a quarterly magazine targeted to the "urban professional." The magazine offers more than 30 ad pages and features profiles of the top 100 African American, Latino and Asian business executive in the U.S. The periodical features print advertising, a weekly newsletter, web site and an event schedule for highly anticipated activities around employee network affinity groups and leadership examples.

About The Trailblazer Award

The Trailblazer award honors a person who has emerged on the scene and blazed new trails in a given industry, discipline or craft.

About The Catalyst Award

The UPTOWN Catalyst Awards spotlight minorities who have truly made a positive impact on their communities at large. The awards recognize those who are leading the charge for diversity in the workplace and positively impact the community in which minority businesses operate.

About World Pac Paper, LLC

World Pac Paper, LLC, an Inc. 500 and award winning company, is a fast growing and market leading global distributor of high quality printing & packaging papers and packaging solutions that is a minority business enterprise incorporated in June 2004. World Pac Paper, LLC serves the Fortune 500/1000, commercial printers, catalogers, book and magazine publishers, integrated and independent corrugated converters, folding carton box manufacturers, tube winders, laminators and paper converters.

For additional information, please contact:

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