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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rochester Area Foundation announces new officers for 2010

Rochester, Minn.—Feb. 24, 2010—At its annual meeting this month, the Rochester Area Foundation Board of Trustees elected new officers for 2010. The meeting also marked the completion of service for two longtime board members.

The board elected Leigh J. Johnson, owner of Custom Alarm/CCi, as chair. Leigh has been a member of the board since 2006 and has served as chair-elect since 2008. John Benike, president of Alvin E. Benike, Inc., was elected vice-chair. Jean Locke, who previously served as secretary and is board chair of the Foundation's First Steps initiative, was also elected vice-chair. Hugh Smith, Mayo Clinic physician and former CEO, was elected secretary. Thomas Wentz, principal at the accounting firm Smith Schafer & Associates, was re-elected Treasurer.

“Strong leadership is vital, especially in the current economic conditions,” said Steve Thornton, Rochester Area Foundation executive director. “In tough times, we frequently see nonprofits serving more people while donations to those organizations dwindle. Under our new board leadership, the Foundation will continue to support and strengthen our community's nonprofit organizations, while also helping donors maximize the impact of their charitable giving.”

Retiring from the board are David Stenhaus, of Wells Fargo Private Client Services, and Craig Wendland, of the law firm Wendland Utz. Both men served for nine years and will continue to be active at the Foundation in their roles on various committees and as members of the First Steps Board of Directors.

The board also recognized the vision and leadership of Michael McNeil, who completed a two-year term as board chair. Michael's steady hand successfully guided the Foundation through a challenging economy. Michael will continue to serve as a trustee.

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About Rochester Area Foundation

Dedicated to community vitality since 1944, Rochester Area Foundation's mission is to strengthen community philanthropy by promoting responsible and informed giving and to assist donors in meeting their charitable objectives. The Foundation uses its resources to improve the quality of life, promote greater equality of opportunities and to develop effective methods to assist those in need in the greater Rochester area. Since 2006, the Foundation has made \$16 million in community investments. Learn more at www.rochesterarea.org.

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