WINTRUST

NEWS RELEASE

Wintrust Financial Corporation Acquires Charter National Bank and Trust in FDIC-Assisted Transaction

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LAKE FOREST, Ill., Feb. 10, 2012 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Wintrust Financial Corporation ("Wintrust") (Nasdaq:WTFC) announced today that its wholly-owned subsidiary bank, Barrington Bank & Trust Company, N.A. ("Barrington Bank"), has acquired certain assets and liabilities and the banking operations of Charter National Bank and Trust ("Charter National") in an FDIC-assisted transaction. Charter National currently operates two locations in Illinois; one in Hoffman Estates and one in Hanover Park, and had approximately $94 million in total assets and $89 million in total deposits as of December 31, 2011. Barrington Bank acquired substantially all of Charter National's assets at a discount of approximately 4.1% and assumed all of the non-brokered deposits at no premium. In connection with the acquisition, Barrington Bank entered into a loss sharing agreement with the FDIC whereby Barrington Bank will share in losses with the FDIC on certain loans and foreclosed real estate related to Charter National.

"This FDIC-assisted transaction provides a great opportunity to expand our presence in Hoffman Estates, where we currently operate Hoffman Estates Community Bank (a branch of Barrington Bank), as well as Hanover Park, a new market for Wintrust," said Edward J. Wehmer, President and CEO of Wintrust. "With this transaction, we have now made eight banking acquisitions in the past two years: seven FDIC-assisted and one unassisted transaction. Mr. Wehmer continued to note, "We expect this transaction will be accretive to net income and earnings per share."

Charter National locations will reopen on Saturday, February 11, 2012 and operate as Hoffman Estates Community Bank, a branch of Barrington Bank & Trust Company, N.A. Depositors of Charter National will continue to have full access to their deposits, including ATM or debit cards, and checks. Customers should continue to bank as usual.

Valuation Appreciation Instrument

In conjunction with the acquisition of Charter National, Wintrust provided the FDIC with a Value Appreciation

Instrument ("VAI") whereby 125,000 units were awarded to the FDIC at an exercise price of $31.00 per unit. The units are exercisable at any time for 180 days after February 10, 2012. If the FDIC exercises the units, Wintrust will be required to pay the FDIC an amount in cash equal to the volume weighted average price of Wintrust common stock over the two trading days immediately prior to the exercise date minus the exercise price, but in no case greater than $8.00 per unit.

About Wintrust

Wintrust is a financial holding company with assets of approximately $16 billion whose common stock is traded on the NASDAQ Global Select Market. Built on the "HAVE IT ALL" model, Wintrust offers sophisticated technology and resources of a large bank while focusing on providing service-based community banking to each and every customer. Wintrust operates fifteen community bank subsidiaries, now with over 100 banking locations located in the greater Chicago and Milwaukee market areas. Additionally, the Company operates various non-bank subsidiaries including one of the largest commercial insurance premium finance companies operating in the United States, a company providing short-term accounts receivable financing and value-added out-sourced administrative services to the temporary staffing services industry, companies engaging in the origination of residential mortgages for sale into the secondary market throughout the United States, and companies providing wealth management services.

Forward-Looking Information

This press release contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of the federal securities laws. Investors are cautioned that such statements are predictions and that actual events or results may differ materially. Wintrust's expected financial results or other plans are subject to a number of risks and uncertainties. For a discussion of such risks and uncertainties, which could cause actual results to differ from those contained in the forward-looking statements, see "Risk Factors" and the forward-looking statement disclosure contained in Wintrust's Annual Report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2011 and in Wintrust's subsequent Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date made and Wintrust undertakes no duty to update the information.

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