WINTRUST

NEWS RELEASE

# Wintrust Financial Corporation Announces Semi-Annual Dividend

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LAKE FOREST, Ill., Jan. 29 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Wintrust Financial Corporation ("Wintrust" or the "Company") (Nasdaq: WTFC) today announced that the Company's Board of Directors approved a semi-annual cash dividend of $0.18 per share of outstanding common stock. The dividend is payable on February 26, 2009 to shareholders of record as of February 12, 2009. This cash dividend, on an annualized basis, is the same as the per share common stock dividends paid during 2008.

WINTRUST SUBSIDIARIES AND LOCATIONS

Wintrust is a financial holding company whose common stock is traded on the Nasdaq Stock Market(R) (Nasdaq: WTFC). Its 15 community bank subsidiaries are: Lake Forest Bank & Trust Company, Hinsdale Bank & Trust Company, North Shore Community Bank & Trust Company in Wilmette, Libertyville Bank & Trust Company, Barrington Bank & Trust Company, Crystal Lake Bank & Trust Company, Northbrook Bank & Trust Company, Advantage National Bank in Elk Grove Village, Village Bank & Trust in Arlington Heights, Beverly Bank & Trust Company in Chicago, Wheaton Bank & Trust Company, State Bank of The Lakes in Antioch, Old Plank Trail Community Bank, N.A. in New Lenox, St. Charles Bank & Trust Company and Town Bank in Hartland, Wisconsin. The banks also operate facilities in Illinois in Algonquin, Bloomingdale, Buffalo Grove, Cary, Chicago, Clarendon Hills, Darien, Deerfield, Downers Grove, Frankfort, Geneva, Glencoe, Glen Ellyn, Gurnee, Grayslake, Highland Park, Highwood, Hoffman Estates, Island Lake, Lake Bluff, Lake Villa, Lindenhurst, McHenry, Mokena, Mundelein, North Chicago, Northfield, Palatine, Prospect Heights, Ravinia, Riverside, Roselle, Sauganash, Skokie, Spring Grove, Vernon Hills, Wauconda, Western Springs, Willowbrook and Winnetka, and in Delafield, Elm Grove, Madison and Wales, Wisconsin.

Additionally, the Company operates various non-bank subsidiaries. First Insurance Funding Corporation, one of the largest commercial insurance premium finance companies operating in the United States, serves commercial loan customers throughout the country. Tricom, Inc. of Milwaukee provides high-yielding, short-term accounts receivable financing and value-added out-sourced administrative services, such as data processing of payrolls, billing and cash management services, to temporary staffing service clients located throughout the United States. Wintrust Mortgage Corporation (formerly known as WestAmerica Mortgage Company) engages primarily in the origination and purchase of residential mortgages for sale into the secondary market through origination offices located throughout the United States. Loans are also originated nationwide through relationships with wholesale and correspondent offices. Wayne Hummer Investments, LLC is a broker-dealer providing a full range of private client and brokerage services to clients and correspondent banks located primarily in the Midwest. Wayne Hummer Asset Management Company provides money management services and advisory services to individual accounts. Wayne Hummer Trust Company, a trust subsidiary, allows Wintrust to service customers' trust and investment needs at each banking location. Wintrust Information Technology Services Company provides information technology support, item capture and statement preparation services to the Wintrust subsidiaries.

FORWARD-LOOKING STATEMENTS

This document contains forward-looking statements within the meaning of federal securities laws. Forward-looking information in this document can be identified through the use of words such as "may," "will," "intend," "plan," "project," "expect," "anticipate," "should," "would," "believe," "estimate," "contemplate," "possible," and "point." The forward-looking information is premised on many factors, some of which are outlined below. The Company intends such forward-looking statements to be covered by the safe harbor provisions for forward-looking statements contained in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, and is including this statement for purposes of invoking these safe harbor provisions. Such forward-looking statements may be deemed to include, among other things, statements relating to the Company's projected growth, anticipated improvements in earnings, earnings per share and other financial performance measures, and management's long-term performance goals, as well as statements relating to the anticipated effects on financial results of condition from expected developments or events, the Company's business and growth strategies, including anticipated internal growth, plans to form additional de novo banks and to open new branch offices, and to pursue additional potential development or acquisitions of banks, wealth management entities or specialty finance businesses. Actual results could differ materially from those addressed in the forward-looking statements as a result of numerous factors, including the following:

-- Competitive pressures in the financial services business which may affect the pricing of the Company's loan and deposit products as well as its services (including wealth management services).

-- Changes in the interest rate environment, which may influence, among other things, the growth of loans and deposits, the quality of the Company's loan portfolio, the pricing of loans and deposits and interest income.
-- The extent of defaults and losses on our loan portfolio.
-- Unexpected difficulties or unanticipated developments related to the Company's strategy of de novo bank formations and openings. De novo banks typically require 13 to 24 months of operations before becoming profitable, due to the impact of organizational and overhead expenses, the startup phase of generating deposits and the time lag typically involved in redeploying deposits into attractively priced loans and other higher yielding earning assets.
-- The ability of the Company to obtain liquidity and income from the sale of premium finance receivables in the future and the unique collection and delinquency risks associated with such loans.
-- Failure to identify and complete acquisitions in the future or unexpected difficulties or unanticipated developments related to the integration of acquired entities with the Company.
-- Legislative or regulatory changes or actions, or significant litigation involving the Company.
-- Changes in general economic conditions in the markets in which the Company operates.
-- The ability of the Company to receive dividends from its subsidiaries.
-- The loss of customers as a result of technological changes allowing consumers to complete their financial transactions without the use of a bank.
-- The ability of the Company to attract and retain senior management experienced in the banking and financial services industries.
-- The risk that the terms of the U.S. Treasury Department's Capital Purchase Program could change.
-- Distressed global credit and capital markets;
-- Changes in market interest rates and loan and deposit pricing in the Company's markets;
-- The effect of continued margin pressure on the Company's financial results;
-- Additional deterioration in asset quality;
-- The possible need for further increases in our allowance for credit losses;
-- Additional charges related to asset impairments;
-- Legislative or regulatory changes, particularly changes in the regulation of financial services companies and/or the products and services offered by financial services companies;
-- The other risk factors set forth in the Company's filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

Therefore, there can be no assurances that future actual results will correspond to these forward-looking statements. The reader is cautioned not to place undue reliance on any forward looking statement made by or on behalf of Wintrust. Any such statement speaks only as of the date the statement was made or as of such date that may be referenced within the statement. The Company undertakes no obligation to release revisions to these forward-looking statements or reflect events or circumstances after the date of this press release. Persons are advised, however, to consult further disclosures management makes on related subjects in its reports filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission and in its press releases.

SOURCE Wintrust Financial Corporation

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