NEWS RELEASE

Wintrust Financial Corporation Declares Semi-Annual Dividend

2004-01-29

LAKE FOREST, Ill., Jan. 29 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Wintrust Financial Corporation (the "Wintrust") (Nasdaq: WTFC) today reported that its Board of Directors approved a semi-annual cash dividend of $0.10 per share of outstanding common stock. The dividend is payable on February 19, 2004 to shareholders of record as of February 5, 2004. This cash dividend, on an annualized basis, represents a 25.0% increase over the per share common stock dividends paid during 2003.

Wintrust is a financial holding company whose common stock is traded on the Nasdaq Stock Market(R) (Nasdaq: WTFC). Its nine suburban Chicago community bank subsidiaries, each of which was founded as a de novo bank since December 1991, are located primarily in high income retail markets -- 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 and Village Bank & Trust in Arlington Heights. The banks also operate facilities in Lake Bluff, Highland Park, Hoffman Estates, Highwood, Glencoe, Winnetka, Clarendon Hills, Western Springs, Skokie, Wauconda, Cary, McHenry, Riverside, Roselle and Prospect Heights, Illinois. 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. Wayne Hummer Investments, LLC is a broker-dealer providing a full range of private client and brokerage services to clients located primarily in the Midwest. Focused Investments LLC is a broker-dealer that provides a full range of investment solutions to clients through a network of community-based financial institutions throughout the

Midwest. Wayne Hummer Asset Management Company provides money management services and advisory services to individual accounts as well as the Wayne Hummer Companies' four proprietary mutual funds.

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.

Currently, Wintrust operates a total of 36 banking offices and is in the process of constructing several additional branch facilities. All of the Company's banking subsidiaries are locally managed with large local boards of directors. Wintrust Financial Corporation has been one of the fastest growing de novo bank groups in Illinois.

SOURCE Wintrust Financial Corporation
-0- 01/29/2004
/CONTACT: Edward J. Wehmer, President & Chief Executive Officer, or David A. Dykstra, Senior Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, both of Wintrust Financial Corporation, +1-847-615-4096/
/Web site: http://www.wintrust.com /
(WTFC)

CO: Wintrust Financial Corporation
ST: Illinois
IN: FIN
SU: DIV

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