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NEWS RELEASE

Wintrust Financial Corporation Will Be Presenting at the Sandler O'Neill & Partners, L.P. West Coast Financial Services Conference on March 10, 2005

2005-03-04

LAKE FOREST, Ill., March 4 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Wintrust Financial Corporation ("Wintrust") (Nasdaq: WTFC) today announced that the Company's President and CEO, Edward J. Wehmer, will present at the Sandler O'Neill & Partners, L.P. West Coast Financial Services Conference to be held on March 10, 2005 in North San Diego, California. The conference can be attended, in person, by invitation only. However, the conference will be broadcast on the Internet at **http://www.sandleroneill.com** and will also be available through Wintrust Financial Corporation's website at **http://www.wintrust.com** . The presentation is scheduled to begin at 10:55 a.m. Pacific Time. The archived webcast will be available for thirty days after the event, beginning March 11, 2005. The conference will also be available via audio conference at 800-239-8730. Callers will need to reference "Sandler O'Neill Conference," then select "Session 2." Listeners should go to the website at least fifteen minutes before the event to download and install any necessary audio software. There is no charge to access the event.

Wintrust is a financial holding company with assets of approximately $7 billion whose common stock is traded on the Nasdaq Stock Market (Nasdaq: WTFC). Wintrust operates thirteen community bank subsidiaries that are located in the 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 primarily in the origination and purchase of residential mortgages for sale into the secondary market throughout the United States, and companies providing wealth management services including broker- dealer, money management services, advisory services, and trust and estate services. Currently, Wintrust operates a total of 55 banking offices and is in the process of constructing several additional branch facilities.

Additional Information

Wintrust has filed a registration statement with the Securities and Exchange Commission in connection with its previously announced proposed acquisition of First Northwest Bancorp, Inc. in a merger transaction consisting of consideration of stock and cash. The registration statement includes a proxy statement/prospectus, seeking approval of the proposed transaction by the shareholders of First Northwest Bancorp, Inc. Shareholders of First Northwest Bancorp, Inc. are advised to read the important information concerning the proposed transaction contained in the proxy statement/prospectus and other documents filed by Wintrust with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Copies of the proxy statement/prospectus relating to the proposed First Northwest Bancorp, Inc. acquisition have been mailed to shareholders of First Northwest Bancorp, Inc. These documents can also be obtained free of charge from the web site maintained by the Securities and Exchange Commission at **http://www.sec.gov** or upon written request to Wintrust Financial Corporation, Attn: Investor Relations, 727 North Bank Lane, Lake Forest, Illinois 60045 or by calling (847) 615-4096, or, for First Northwest Bancorp, Inc. shareholders, upon written request to First Northwest Bancorp, Inc., Attn: President, 234 W. Northwest Highway, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60004 or by calling (847) 670-1000.

SOURCE Wintrust Financial Corporation
-0- 03/04/2005
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(WTFC)

CO: Wintrust Financial Corporation; Sandler O'Neill & Partners, L.P. West Coast Financial Services Conference
ST: Illinois, California
IN: FIN
SU: CCA MAV TDS

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