WINTRUST

NEWS RELEASE

Wintrust Financial Corporation to Present at Raymond James and Associates 26th Annual Institutional Investors Conference

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LAKE FOREST, Ill., March 3 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Wintrust Financial Corporation ("Wintrust") (Nasdaq: WTFC) will present at the Raymond James and Associates 26th Annual Institutional Investors Conference to be held in Orlando, FL on March 6 - 9, 2005. Wintrust's presentation is scheduled to begin at 10:25 a.m., Eastern Time, on March 8, 2005.

This event will be webcast and may be accessed at Wintrust's website at **http://www.wintrust.com** or at **http://www.wsw.com/webcast/rjii05/wtfc/**. Listeners should go to the website at least fifteen minutes before the presentation to download and install any necessary audio software. For those unable to attend the live broadcast, a replay will be available for 30 days after the conference. 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
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/Web site: http://www.wintrust.comhttp://www.wsw.com/webcast/rjii05/wtfc / (WTFC)

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ST: Illinois
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