



For Immediate Release

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Middle Tennessee Society for Human Resource Management and Nashville Chamber Announce Recipients of 2008 HR Excellence Awards

NASHVILLE, TN: (June 2, 2008) – Williamson Medical Center, A.O. Smith Water Products Company and Pinnacle Financial Partners won top honors in the seventh annual HR Excellence Awards Program hosted by the Middle Tennessee Society of Human Resource Management (MT|SHRM) and the Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce. Winners will be recognized at a luncheon on Thursday, June 12, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Cool Springs Embassy Suites.

Launched in 2002, the HR Excellence Awards Program recognizes organizations in the Nashville area with outstanding human resources programs. Businesses are invited to self-nominate for the honor each year and are evaluated on proficiency in five areas: strategy; management practices; employee education, training and development; performance measurement; and employee well-being and engagement. The Facet of HR Excellence Award recognizes excellence in one of the above five criteria. Sponsors of the 2008 HR Excellence Award program include Lee Hecht Harrison and Ogletree, Deakins, Nash, Smoak & Stewart PC.

Williamson Medical Center, a 185-bed hospital and medical services provider, won Facets of HR Excellence Awards for Human Resource Management Practices and Employee Well-Being and Engagement. A.O. Smith won a Facet Award for Human Resource management practices. Pinnacle Financial Partners received a Facet of HR Excellence Award for Employee Well-Being and Engagement.

“Human Resources is an important component of any business because you have to look at each employee as an asset and a way to differentiate your business,” said Don Holmes, senior vice president of human resources for Central Parking Corporation and chair of the HR Excellence examiner committee. “The HR Excellence Award process recognizes area companies who are leading in this field.”

Williamson Medical Center's two awards reflect a strong commitment to the ongoing development of employees and the HR systems that support them. Their Six Pillars of Excellence (service, people, community, quality, finance and growth) are reflected in HR programs and recited by heart by employees. WMC's "School at Work" program offers entry-level employees the opportunity to advance their education while at work. The 32-week program focuses on computer skills, reading, writing, grammar and math, as well as medical terminology, anatomy and physiology. Approximately 40 percent of WMC's 38 graduates have been promoted.

At A.O. Smith, the human resources function has become an integral part of the company's leadership culture. Judges recognized the systematic and results-driven approach taken by the HR team and supported throughout the organization. A.O. Smith's integrated business model (which includes the Kaizen "continuous improvement" principle) is communicated throughout the organization and well-integrated into HR systems. Their strategy of "attract, develop and retain top talent by building a high performance environment" is echoed throughout the organization and demonstrated through Excellence Programs that align employees with the organization's key drivers for success, including management excellence, selection / on-boarding and employee development.

Pinnacle Financial Partners' culture reflects the company's dedication to creating an environment that promotes employee well-being. President Terry Turner's direct involvement with employee communications, the performance evaluation process and employee recognition events helps to reinforce the organization's core message to its employees: "We're all in this together." There is a staff-wide accountability for employee recruitment and retention, communications, coaching and employee relations. Employees laud the HR programs, their work-life balance ("I got my life back when I came to work here," said one employee), the mergers/acquisition process and the bonus program.

To help other Middle Tennessee companies improve their HR departments, leaders from Williamson Medical Center, A.O. Smith and Pinnacle Financial Partners will share their best HR practices with all interested companies during a workshop in the fall.

For more information about the HR Excellence Awards luncheon or to register to attend, visit www.mtshrm.org. Cost for Nashville Area Chamber or MT|SHRM members is \$25; the cost for guests is \$40. Corporate tables seating ten are also available for \$400. To register, visit www.mtshrm.org or call MT|SHRM at (615) 834.1355.

The Middle Tennessee Society for Human Resource Management (MT|SHRM) is a not for profit association with more than 650 Human Resource (HR) professionals practicing in business, education and government. For more information visit the MT|SHRM website at www.mtshrm.org.

The Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce is Middle Tennessee's largest business federation, representing 2,500 member companies. Belong, engage, lead, prosper embodies what the Chamber focuses on for its members. Together with its affiliates, the Nashville Chamber works to strengthen the region's business climate and to enhance Nashville's position as a desirable place to live, work and visit. For more information, visit NashvilleChamber.com.

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