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### **Barkley to Acquire Boasberg\Wheeler Communications**

(Kansas City) – Barkley, one of the top 10 largest independent agencies in the U.S., has entered into an agreement to acquire Kansas City-based Boasberg\Wheeler Communications. The deal is expected to close by the end of August 2009. The move emphasizes the vital role PR plays in Barkley's future growth by creating a combined public relations operation with income of more than \$6 million. This further establishes Barkley's strong position as it competes for clients on the national and regional level.

"We think Boasberg\Wheeler is a wonderful fit for Barkley," said Jeff King, CEO, Barkley. "Both agencies were founded on common qualities including a fierce entrepreneurial spirit and an intense focus on client service. Our combined clients would have access to expanded resources, talent and energy as we look for new ways to meet their marketing and communications needs."

The acquisition would also facilitate the consolidation of efforts in support of UMB Financial Corporation. Barkley and Boasberg\Wheeler have served as UMB's advertising and public relations agencies of record from June of 2007 and April of 2003 respectively. Other key Boasberg\Wheeler clients include Buck Consultants, Inc., Power Partners—the combined marketing effort of the National Electrical Contractors Association and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers—and Coventry Healthcare. Key Barkley PR clients include Blue Bunny ice cream, the Breast Cancer 3-Day, Lee Jeans, L'Oréal Paris, March of Dimes, Minute Rice and Sonic Drive-In.

"With sweeping changes in our industry shifting even more focus on personal communication, the significant role public relations plays in a brand's communication strategy is growing exponentially," said Mike Swenson, CMO, Barkley and founder of Barkley's PR discipline. "Boasberg\Wheeler would bring a wealth of experience that will further bolster Barkley's two-decade-old PR specialty."

"For most of our 28-year history we have enjoyed competing with the PR team at Barkley," commented Larry Wheeler, Boasberg\Wheeler CEO and owner. "We approach this agreement knowing that the cultural and philosophical fit is in the best interest of our clients and staff. Operating as an independent, Kansas City-based company has always been important to us and I am delighted and honored that we have been given the opportunity to partner with a company that feels the same way."

#### *About Barkley:*

*Barkley is the largest employee-owned agency of its kind. Founded in 1964, the company has 325 partners offering a full range of marketing communications services including advertising, public relations, cause branding, sponsorships and events, relationship marketing, social media, design, media planning and buying, motion graphics, research and interactive marketing. Barkley has offices in Kansas City and Pittsburgh with additional field offices across the nation. More info: [www.barkleyus.com](http://www.barkleyus.com) and [www.barkleyREI.com](http://www.barkleyREI.com).*

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