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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Patrick Nicolini Joins Howe Barnes Hoefler & Arnett's Investment Banking Group

June 14, 2007, Chicago, IL- Howe Barnes Hoefler & Arnett announces the appointment of Patrick Nicolini as First Vice President and Managing Director, Investment Banking. Patrick will provide investment banking advisory services to many of the firm's key relationships in California and the entire West Coast. Prior to joining Howe Barnes, Nicolini led numerous transactions, including mergers and acquisitions, capital offerings and general advisory assignments. He has over eight years of investment banking experience most recently as a Director at the San Francisco office of RBC Capital Markets and seven years of finance and accounting experience with Deloitte & Touche. Nicolini received his B.A. in Economics from The University of California at Berkeley and an M.B.A. from Georgetown University School of Business. He is also a CPA.

Mr. Nicolini commented, "I'm very pleased to be joining a national leader in investment banking to bank and thrifts. Howe Barnes represents a platform of unsurpassed capabilities, extremely well aligned to support the continued success of dynamic West Coast banks."

According to Howe Barnes' Director of Investment Banking, Brian Ytterberg, "We are excited to have Patrick join us as we expand our West Coast presence. Patrick shares our commitment of providing excellent advice and service to our banking clients."

Established in 1915, Howe Barnes Hoefler & Arnett, Inc. is a full service brokerage firm headquartered in Chicago, IL with offices in eight states throughout the U.S. Through its bank sales and trading, research, investment banking and asset finance services departments, Howe Barnes specializes in community banks and thrifts. Through its private client services department, the firm provides investment advice and products to both individual and institutional customers. Howe Barnes Hoefler & Arnett is the exclusive provider of capital markets services for the Independent Community Bankers of America (ICBA). The firm delivers fixed income products and services through a strategic initiative with Vining Sparks IBG, Memphis, Tennessee. (www.howebarnes.com)

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