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NEWS RELEASE

M&A TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WEALTH MANAGERS IN 2010

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LOS ANGELES, JANUARY 4, 2010 - With the markets now on a sustained upswing after taking a torrid roller coaster ride over the past eighteen months, the M&A landscape for wealth managers has been infused by an optimism not seen since 2007. Higher cash flows, more reasonable valuation multiples, and continued demand to buy wealth management firms, among other things, have laid the groundwork for much greater deal activity than was apparent during the recession-afflicted years of 2008 and 2009. In fact, according to a report by **ECHELON Partners**, M&A activity is expected to pick up meaningfully in 2010, as more wealth managers pursue succession plans, advisors move away from challenged larger firms, and mergers become an attractive way to facilitate growth and create value.

"2010 should present some amazing opportunities for buyers and sellers; they are just not likely to be traditional ones," says **Dan Seivert**, CEO and Managing Partner at ECHELON Partners. "Still, the payoffs should be substantial for those who are willing to roll up their sleeves a little bit."

To assess the M&A landscape in 2010 in terms of the emerging trends and opportunities for wealth managers, ECHELON Partners has developed a succinct and timely report, entitled *M&A Trends and Opportunities for Wealth Managers*, that covers the outlook from the perspective of both the prospective buyer and the prospective seller, as well as an overview of valuations, deal structures, and deal volumes that we can expect in the coming year.

"Given that we are at the beginning of a new year, we know that a lot of our clients have a need for this type of intelligence for their annual strategic processes," says Seivert. "Understanding that they would likely need our M&A-specific intelligence and analysis for this endeavor, we put together this report to facilitate their planning and decision-making."

ABOUT ECHELON PARTNERS

ECHELON Partners (ECHELON) was formed in 2001 to offer investment banking and consulting to a subset of the financial services industry known as "investment product developers and distributors" (IPDADs). Since that time, ECHELON's professionals have helped hundreds of senior executives envision, initiate, and execute a multitude of complex business strategies and transactions. ECHELON's business is making companies more valuable through delivering advice and orchestrating transactions. Accordingly, ECHELON measures its success in the enterprise value it creates for its clients. Companies that strive to outperform their peers choose to work with ECHELON because we are as passionate about their results as they are.

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