



Milestone Partners and Management Acquire Mariner Finance, LLC

Saint Davids, PA, December 15, 2009 – Milestone Partners is pleased to announce that on December 14, 2009 it completed the acquisition of Mariner Finance, LLC (“Mariner Finance” or the “Company”) from First Mariner Bancorp (“First Mariner”, NasdaqGM: FMAR).

Headquartered in Baltimore, MD, Mariner Finance (www.marinerfinance.com) is a leading provider of medium-term installment loans, related credit insurance and ancillary products to near-prime borrowers. The Company’s installment loans help customers meet funding needs and purchase items for which financing is not available from other providers. Mariner Finance serves customers through 41 stores in six states in the Mid-Atlantic and Tennessee. The management team has more than 150 years of combined experience in the consumer finance industry and has developed proprietary systems to underwrite loans resulting in low delinquency rates.

Josh Johnson, CEO of the Company, said “Mariner Finance’s personalized service and disciplined lending standards differentiate us from the competition and are the driving forces behind attracting new customers and repeat business. We are excited to partner with Milestone as their financial and strategic resources will help us execute our growth plan.” Scott Warren and Adam Curtin of Milestone added “We are thrilled to have the opportunity to invest in Mariner Finance. The management team has built a tremendous platform that is primed to take share in the market.”

Investment banking firm Janney Montgomery Scott advised First Mariner. The law firm Pepper Hamilton advised Milestone. Wells Fargo and First Tennessee Bank provided senior debt financing for the transaction. The management team of Mariner Finance co-invested equity alongside Milestone.

For more information about the transaction, contact [Scott Warren](#) or [Adam Curtin](#) at Milestone Partners.

Milestone Partners (www.milestonepartners.com) is a private equity firm that partners with management to invest in leveraged buyouts and recapitalizations of lower middle market businesses. Milestone pursues successful niche-market leaders that provide high-margin products or services. Milestone’s transactions typically provide liquidity to shareholders of privately-owned businesses, facilitate the transition of ownership to key managers, and allow management to capitalize on growth opportunities, while maintaining the legacy of the founders. Milestone is currently making follow-on and add-on investments through Milestone Partners II, L.P., a \$120 million fund, and is making new platform investments through Milestone Partners III, L.P., a \$240 million fund.

Milestone Representative Investments:



Avure Technologies
(high pressure presses)



Black Letter Discovery
(litigation support services)



Blaschak Coal Corp.
(anthracite mining and processing)



CODi
(corporate laptop cases & accessories)



DydaComp
(e-commerce & catalog software)



Eliason
(commercial double-action impact doors)



Fatz Cafe
(casual dining restaurant chain)



Global Connection
(pre-paid wireline phone service)



Good Health Natural Products
(natural foods & body care products)



Interconnect Devices
(electronic contact probes & connectors)



Knights Apparel
(licensed sports apparel)



Mariner Finance
(consumer installment loans)



Outlook Group
(printing, packaging & direct mail)



Safemark Systems
(in-room hotel safes)



Trans-Trade
(non-asset based logistics)



United Road Towing
(towing services)

Milestone General Investment Criteria:

Company Size*:

- Revenue: \$15-\$150 million
- EBITDA: \$3-\$15 million

Transaction Size*:

- \$15-\$100 million

Equity Investment Size*:

- \$5-\$25 million (& higher, with typical co-invest)

Industry Focus:

- Generalist; high-margin, niche-market manufacturers, value-added distributors and service companies

Geography:

- United States and Canada

*Add-on parameters may be smaller

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