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8:00 a.m. Monday, July 25, 2011

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**Thorntons Inc. Named  
2011 Convenience Store Chain of the Year by  
*Convenience Store Decisions* magazine**

Outstanding service, a sincere dedication to its team members and an ongoing commitment to elevating convenience retailing earn the Louisville, Ky. based chain the industry's oldest and most prestigious award.

**(TEANECK, N.J.--July 25, 2011)** Continuing a tradition it began in 1990, *Convenience Store Decisions* is proud to announce Thorntons Inc. as its 2011 Convenience Store Chain of Year.

Thorntons, which will be honored at awards reception Sunday, Oct. 2 during the NACS Show at the exclusive Café Spiaggia in Chicago, was chosen for a number of reasons, said *Convenience Store Decisions'* Editor-in-Chief John Lofstock.

While the industry has experienced quite a bit of merger and acquisition activity over the past two decades, 2011 marks the 40th anniversary for Thorntons. The family-owned company has maintained remarkable leadership stability through the years. The company was founded in 1971 by James Thornton and is now run by his son, Matt, who serves as president and CEO.

Today, the company operates 162 stores in five Midwestern states and distributes petroleum products through its wholly-owned Thornton Transportation Co., in addition to seven car washes, a bulk fuel terminal and several ethanol blending facilities, a commissary in Louisville that manufactures and distributes fresh foods to 42 stores daily, and a Dunkin' Donuts franchise that manages 32 locations in Kentucky and Indiana.

"At a time when many chains across all retail channels are struggling, Thorntons remains a beacon of stability in the very competitive convenience store and petroleum industry," Lofstock said. "Coupled with its outstanding leadership team that begins with President and CEO Matt Thornton, Thorntons has earned a reputation as a special company that cares for its team members, customers and the communities it serves. For its commitment to convenience retailing, customers and its team members, Thorntons exemplifies the spirit of the Chain of the Year award and we are proud to recognize them with this coveted honor."

The proof of Thorntons' success lies in the numbers. Thorntons' annual revenues have surpassed \$1.7 billion and the company in 2010 ranked No. 250 among Forbes 500 largest privately held companies.

"On behalf of our 2,200 awesome team members, who work hard to delight every day, we are thrilled and deeply honored to receive this prestige award," said Matt Thornton. "Thank you for your interest in our team and service to our industry."

Following its strong 2010, Thorntons kept pushing forward in 2011. The company is on track to build seven new stores this year and remodel five more. Thorntons also developed and implemented an internal charitable organization named "Champ Cares," to support and assist team members that may have suffered an unexpected life event, medical situation or hardship. The fund is made up of donations from team members and matched dollar for dollar by the company.

**Other highlights over the past 12 months include:**

- \* Expanding the availability of E-85 to 32 locations from 7 in 2010.
- \* Developing a unique store General Manager bonus program that focuses on meeting financial targets for sales growth, expense control and customer service.
- \* Achieved the lowest team member turnover in company history.
- \* Continuing its focus on giving back to the community through various programs such as selling stars for make a wish which raised over \$10,000 in April 2011, supporting breast cancer research through various events throughout the year and sponsoring a Humanitarian Day at Fort Knox for families of soldiers serving overseas where the Thorntons team purchased and assembled 100 bicycles for children of deployed troops and assembled 3,500 care packages that were sent with troops deployed from Fort Knox in February 2011.
- \* Supported the city of Louisville through its waterfront development program.
- \* Provided a significant contribution to support local parks development through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Parks Foundation.
- \* Selected as a 2011 Top Workplaces in Louisville/Southern Indiana by the *Courier Journal*
- \* Provided a significant contribution to support the expansion of the Speed Museum in Louisville.

"Thorntons is a model of consistency with an outstanding retail offering and a special rapport with its employees and customers," said Tom McIntyre, group publisher of *Convenience Store Decisions*. "The purpose of the Chain of the Year award is to showcase the best of the best in convenience retailing and Thorntons certainly meets that definition."

Thorntons also believes in being open and honest with its team members and setting clear, direct goals. As part of its core values management reinforces respect for each other and that every team member counts. Everyone has a voice in the company and the result is that team members are eager step up and provide ideas to ensure exceptional service to its customers.

Seating for the Chain of the Year awards dinner is limited. For ticket information contact CSD Editor John Lofstock at [jlofstock@csdecisions.com](mailto:jlofstock@csdecisions.com) or CSD Group Publisher Tom McIntyre at [tmcintyre@csdecisions.com](mailto:tmcintyre@csdecisions.com).

### **About the Chain of the Year Award**

*Convenience Store Decisions* Chain of the Year award annually honors a convenience store or petroleum chain that has established itself as a superior retailer and innovator in its markets of operation. CSD's first Chain of the Year award was given to Wawa Inc. in 1990. Thorntons follows 2010 Chain of the Year winner Rutter's Farm Stores. Other past winners include Sheetz Inc., 7-Eleven Inc., Krause Gentle Corp., Amerada Hess, Exxon Mobil Corp., Petro-Canada and Kwik Trip Inc.

### **PAST CHAIN OF THE YEAR WINNERS**

- \* 1990 – Wawa Inc.
- \* 1991 – SuperAmerica
- \* 1992 – QuikTrip Corp.
- \* 1993 – Casey's General Stores Inc.
- \* 1994 – Sheetz Inc.
- \* 1995 – Diamond Shamrock Corp.
- \* 1996 – Mapco Express
- \* 1997 – Speedway Inc.
- \* 1998 – Krause Gentle Corp.
- \* 1999 – Dairy Mart Inc.
- \* 2000 – Amerada Hess Corp.
- \* 2001 – Huck's Food & Fuel
- \* 2002 – Petro-Canada
- \* 2003 – Exxon Mobil Corp.
- \* 2004 – Kwik Trip Inc.
- \* 2005 – 7-Eleven Inc.
- \* 2006 - Valero Inc.
- \* 2007 - Alimentation Couche-Tard
- \* 2008 - Chevron Inc.
- \* 2009 - Nice N Easy Grocery Shoppes
- \* 2010 - Rutter's Farm Stores

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Founded by Kentucky native James H. Thornton in 1971, Thorntons Inc. is one of the leading independent gasoline and convenience chain retailers in the U.S., currently operating throughout the Midwest under the brand name **Thorntons**. With over \$1.4 billion in revenue, Thorntons is one of largest privately held corporations in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Headquartered in Louisville, Kentucky, Thorntons operates 162 gasoline and convenience stores, car washes and travel plazas in five states: Kentucky, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and Tennessee. Thorntons distributes its petroleum products through its wholly owned Thornton Transportation Company and operates a river bulk storage terminal in Louisville. For more information visit [www.thorntonsinc.com](http://www.thorntonsinc.com) and follow us on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/thorntonsinc](http://www.facebook.com/thorntonsinc) and Twitter at [www.twitter.com/thorntonsinc](http://www.twitter.com/thorntonsinc).