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THE WHITESTONE GROUP

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Business First “Fast 50” Praises Whitestone, Clark

Columbus, OH – Sep. 23 – Business First Magazine has released their 2010 Fast 50 list, which honors some of Central Ohio's fastest-growing privately held companies based on their financial performance during the last three years. The Whitestone Group, Inc., with corporate offices at Easton, in Columbus, was selected as one of this year's honorees. Whitestone is in the business of providing Government and Commercial Asset Protection and Federal Contract Protective Security Officers. John D. Clark, Sr. is President, CEO and Founder.

Looking back over the progress his company has made in the past ten years, Clark says he knows the value of providing impeccable customer service to his customers. Now responsible for protecting some of this country's greatest assets – the Hoover Dam, the U.S. Department of Justice Building in Washington, D.C., the Department of Energy Western Area Power Administration facilities in Colorado – the Whitestone Group has made its mark as one of the leading federal government security companies in the nation.

With a combination of successful business experience and a strong background in law enforcement, Clark said he recognized back in 2000, that there was a tremendous void in the number of professional security officers and quality investigators available to commercial and government customers. By providing strong professional security programs with well-trained professionals that went beyond the basic security services that were common at the time, Clark said he was positive that Whitestone's services would be embraced by customers and appreciated by law enforcement. So Clark took his vision and an experienced support team to a large Fortune 500 Company in Cincinnati, and convinced them to contract the young Whitestone company to manage a major security situation.

A year and a half later when Sept. 11 shook the nation, Whitestone was too new in the market to tap into the rapidly created Homeland Security projects, but the company quickly expanded to provide security and investigative services to other large corporations. In the fall of 2004, Whitestone began positioning the company for government contracts and received its U.S. General Services Administration (GSA) Schedule in early 2005. Making the transition to the government sector,

Whitestone received multiple government contracts for armed security services when the unfortunate Hurricane Katrina disaster hit later that year.

When asked if business can grow too quickly, Clark stated, "I don't see any danger in growing too quickly because even in the early stages of company development, Whitestone experienced aggressive growth." He continued to say that one of the company's first objectives was to bring in high quality, seasoned professional talent that could pilot the company through the growing pains and economic challenges. "It has been the expertise and experience of Whitestone's key personnel that has provided the rock solid foundation and foresight to predict potential problems associated with rapid growth," Clark says of his staff. "Adhering to solid, good business practices ensures stability and successful problem resolution at any level."

Hard economic times actually created a period of opportunity for Whitestone according to Clark. As the "Great Recession" became eminent, he said that Whitestone took the steps to posture the company in a good financial position, assisted with tremendous support from a local community bank. Unlike so many other small businesses, he explained, Whitestone has only been somewhat limited by the banking nightmare and has been able to progress. "We are proud that during this period of rising unemployment and lost jobs, Whitestone has been able to create new jobs not only in Ohio but in other states across the country as well."

Clark understands customer service. "During a recession, the cream rises to the top. With the limited budgets they have today, customers look for the maximum obvious best value solutions to their problems. If a company can solve the problem and provide the superior quality service they are looking for, it becomes a natural process to not always hire the cheapest service provider. Instead, they hire well-trained, well-organized services that will share their vision for the future. You can't take the easy way out," Clark said, "Although it's harder to go the distance, it's more rewarding in the end. It's about customer satisfaction and customers recognize that quality."

Given the time and tuition to shore up his expertise, Clark said that he'd like to learn more about Strategic Planning and Positioning. "I think strategic planning is a valuable tool that can help with future revenue planning, new business development and employee empowerment. The development of a strategic plan in itself pulls together company personnel in a collaborative effort to plan the company's future and take ownership of the strides taken," he said.

Clark grew up with entrepreneurs. As a young man, he was integrated into the family business - a restaurant in Cincinnati owned and operated by his parents. He later graduated from a private military academy and joined the military during the Vietnam era which he claims, "built my foundation for the leadership and disciplinary skills to own and operate my own business."

After the military Clark signed on as a marketing representative at a leading furniture manufacturer where he said he met the mentors that would later influence his philosophy on customer service. "I was fortunate during that time to work with extremely bright, innovative business owners and vendors that taught me to have a true appreciation for core business values. I discovered through experience that you need to communicate with your customer and when you service the customer, you service the customer well."

INFO BOX

Company Name: **Whitestone Group, Inc.**

Business: **Government and Commercial Asset Protection and Protective Security Officers**

Based: **Columbus, OH**

CEO/ Principals: John D. Clark, Sr., **President, CEO and Founder**

Total Employees: 400

Area Employees: (Columbus area) 65

2009 Revenue:

Website: www.whitestonegroup.us