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AIC Ventures Acquires World's Finest Chocolate's Real Estate in Chicago, IL

AUSTIN, TX - AIC Ventures has acquired Chicago-based World's Finest Chocolate's 435,677-square-foot headquarters, a manufacturing and distribution plant located on eleven acres at 4801 South Lawndale Avenue in Chicago, IL. Concurrent with their purchase, AIC Ventures simultaneously entered into a long-term lease with World's Finest Chocolate, the leading manufacturer of chocolate products made specifically for the fund-raising industry. World's Finest Chocolate sells products directly to charitable organizations as well as to retail stores, catalog merchants, corporate gift programs, gift basket programs, through their website and through outlet stores throughout Illinois.

"We timed our acquisition to meet WFC's needs. The sale leaseback will allow WFC to better position themselves for continued growth," said David Steinwedell, managing partner, AIC Ventures. "World's Finest Chocolate was represented by Craig Zodikoff with GVA Kidder Mathews and Bradley Metzger with CresaPartners," he added. "We are pleased to complete another acquisition in the greater Chicago area and are targeting additional activity in the market over the next twelve months. We expect that this year we will keep pace with last year's acquisitions of \$250 million. Some advantages we have over traditional financing are that we are more flexible, the rate is fixed for the term of the lease and we generally have no covenants," Steinwedell continued.

About AIC Ventures

AIC Ventures is a leading provider of alternative capital to middle-market companies via sale leaseback and build-to-suit real estate transactions. With over \$900 million in completed transactions, AIC Ventures structures innovative corporate finance solutions for companies that need to strengthen their balance sheets, fund growth initiatives including acquisitions, fund succession planning and/or support other strategic initiatives. The company has closed 111 transactions in 28 states. Whether sellers need to close quickly, have private equity interests, environmental or other challenges, AIC Ventures can help. For more information, visit www.AICVentures.com.

About GVA Kidder Mathews

GVA Kidder Mathews is one of the largest independent commercial real estate firms on the West Coast, with over 400 real estate professionals and staff in 9 offices including Washington, Oregon, and California. They provide a full array of brokerage, appraisal, property management, consulting, sustainability practices, and construction & development management services.

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