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BARBERS INTERNATIONAL HOSTS 2nd ANNUAL BARBERS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE August 4 - 6, 2007 @ Chicago's Westin O'Hare Hotel www.BarbersInternational.com

NEW YORK, NY, March 2007 – Barbers International (BI), the leading source for barber education and men's grooming, will host the second annual global conference for barbers August 4-6, 2007 at Chicago's Westin O'Hare Hotel; www.BarbersInternational.com.

BI's Founding Sponsors **Milady–Thomson Delmar Learning** and **The Prostate Net**, along with **Andis, 44/20** and other leading companies will sponsor educational sessions and special events. The 2007 conference will feature a “**Master Barber of the Year**” Award, **haircutting competitions for students and professionals** and a proposed barber school association. Last year, nearly 200 barbers age 20-74 from 30 states attended the 1st Annual BI conference in Las Vegas; more than 400 barbers are expected in Chicago!

To join BI and register for the conference, visit www.BarbersInternational.com or call (870) 210-1500. The host hotel is Westin O'Hare, 6100 North River Road, Rosemont, IL 60018; for reservations, call (847) 698-6000 or 1-(800)-WESTIN1.

BI membership is open to barbers, educators, barber students and hair professionals; sponsor/presenter opportunities are still available. Educational sessions will feature an Ask the Experts Panel; Haircutting and Shaving Workshops; Marketing Your Shop – What Works and What Doesn't; Hair Loss in Depth; Preparing Students for State Board Written & Practical Exams; Legislative Information; Men's Health and Health Insurance for Barbers and other cutting-edge topics. Conference registration and BI research indicates:

- > **Worldwide increase in barber school attendance;**
- > **Increased volume of hair and skin care products being marketed directly to men;**
- > **Growing number of cosmetologists who seek barber training to enhance their skills and abilities to serve the male client;**
- > **Barbers have a much lower turnover rate than cosmetologists.**

“Barbershops with style or male-themed salons” are part of a national trend toward men's interest in specialized grooming services, according to the Los Angeles Times (www.latimes.com, August 2006). Many barbershops now feature straight-razor shaves, skin care, hair replacement, manicures / pedicures and massages – in addition to traditional and trendy haircuts. Many “male-themed salons,” complete with major league sports on plasma screens, chessboards, and shoe shine services, are located in metropolitan and suburban areas throughout the country and the numbers are growing!

BI Executive Director Charles Kirkpatrick says, “We are educating barbers about exciting business expansion and customer service opportunities that exist in support of this trend. And, Barbers International serves as an important channel to barbers, shops, schools, suppliers, and manufacturers who want to reach male clients of distinction who demand quality services.” BI estimates there are approximately 230,000 licensed barbers, 100,000 barbershops and 700 barber schools in the US; overseas, 500,000 licensed barbers and 450,000 shops. All represent a portion of the \$45 billion hair-care and grooming services industry that includes the barber industry and professional salons. Neighborhood barbershops remain fixtures in American cities, contributing to the economic security of entrepreneurs who own them—and the communities they serve. Historically an important gathering place for men, barbershops are symbols of contemporary pop culture, and are regularly featured in ads, movies and on TV!

BI has support from trade organizations such as the **National Association of Barber Boards of America (NABBA)**, which represents state barber boards throughout the U.S. The BI Advisory Board includes a distinguished roster of industry talent, barber educators and even a “barber advocate” who uses his barbershop to promote men's wellness campaigns.

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