

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Associated Industries and WSA Announce Business Partnership

Partnership will serve technology community in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho.

SEATTLE – (Aug. 29, 2006) – WSA, the state’s oldest and largest technology trade organization focused on ensuring Washington State’s leadership position in the digital economy, today announced a business partnership with Associated Industries to promote comprehensive employer services and workplace solutions for technology companies in Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho.

The partnership combines Associated Industries' extensive experience and knowledge in critical business functions with WSA's intellectual capital makes for a natural business relationship. By putting the strengths of these two quality organizations together for Eastern Washington’s tech sector, the result will be higher value membership services that are critical to achieving business success in this region.

The WSA has been linked to the Spokane area and Eastern Washington for many years through a solid core of members and by our statewide advocacy of key public policy issues. The WSA has recently strengthened that link by its partnership with CONNECT Northwest. The WSA has helped sponsor CONNECT’s Emerging Growth and Innovation Series and provides a link to CONNECT’s website from WSA’s.

CONNECT Northwest will be the primary vehicle through which the AI-WSA partnership will be made available to enable innovative and entrepreneurial companies get the right kind of help to grow and thrive.

“This is a natural business partnership that ensures the promotion and growth of the technology industry in Washington State, specifically in Eastern Washington and North Idaho,” said Kathy Wilcox, WSA President and CEO.

“This strategic business relationship gives WSA an excellent partner in AI, with which the WSA can build a stronger presence in this fast-growing technology region,” Wilcox said.

“Associated Industries and WSA are working directly together in ways that will help nurture and grow technology businesses in the Inland Northwest,” said Jim DeWalt, President and CEO of Associated Industries. “We look forward to a strong partnership that will develop key business management services tailored for the technology industry in this region.”

Statewide and Diverse Industry

More than 3,000 software and software-related businesses in the state of Washington employ approximately 68,000 people and pay more than \$10-billion in wages.

The firms include start-ups to Fortune 500 companies offering a huge range of leading-edge technology products and services, from consumer-packaged goods to massive turn-key custom applications. The industry is backed by world-class research and educational institutions, a huge service industry skilled in supporting technology companies, a strong and growing local venture capital community, and a skilled labor pool.

About Associated Industries

Established in 1910, Associated Industries is a membership employers association comprised of approximately 500 member firms and 40, 000 employees located throughout the Eastern Washington-

Northern Idaho region. The AI range of membership services and expertise extends through a variety of critical business functions to include: Human Resource Management; Industrial Safety consultation; Employment Law; Electronic payroll services and health care benefit services-medical, dental and eye care to its members firms. For more information, visit www.aiin.com

About the WSA

Founded in 1984, the WSA (formerly the Washington Software Alliance) is a catalyst for industry and collaboration and networking. The result is that it is the region's leader in the technology industry. WSA has grown to become the state's largest technology trade association with 1,000 member firms representing software; Internet, telecommunications, health and bio-IT and digital media and video games. The WSA offers key business services and leads the advocacy of policy and legislative issues necessary to increase Washington State's impact the global digital economy. For more information, visit www.wsa.org.

About Connect NW

CONNECT Northwest is a non-profit organization with the goal of advancing entrepreneurship and business growth in the Inland Northwest. Through an array of programs Connect NW represents a network of entrepreneurs, business executives and angel investors committed to the advancement of entrepreneurship and business development throughout the region. CONNECT NW specializes in early stage business development enhanced by early introduction to local/regional business executives as well as to applicable research community resources. For more information, visit www.connectnw.org.

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