



PRESS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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JAPAC Initiates Multi-Year Fund-Raising Campaign

Number of JAPAC Board Members Expands to 11, Reflecting Added Commitment to Fund-Raising

New York, NY – JAPAC, the Jewelers of America Political Action Committee, which contributes funds to the political campaigns of legislators sympathetic to the jewelry industry’s causes, has expanded its board of directors and embarked on a two-year drive to raise funds from Jewelers of America members.

William Farmer, Farmer’s Jewelers, Lexington, KY, was reappointed to a second term as chair of JAPAC’s board. Joining Farmer are returning board members: Jon Bridge, Ben Bridge Jeweler, Seattle, WA; Barbara Hight-Randall, Hight & Randall, Ltd., Rochester, MN; and Jewelers of America President and CEO Matthew A. Runci, who serves as treasurer of JAPAC.

Newly appointed board members include:

- John Hayes, Goodman’s Jewelers, Madison, WI;
- Artie Bennos, Simms II Jewelers, Winchester, MA;
- Woody Justice, Justice Jewelers, Springfield, MO;
- Carolyn Pope, Crews Jewelry, Grandview, MO;
- Jeffrey Corey, Days Jewelers, Waterville, ME;
- Peter Engel, Fred Meyer Jewelers, Portland, OR;
- Scot Congress, Congress Jewelers, Sanibel Island, FL.

“Jewelers of America is grateful for the work of the JAPAC Board in raising funds to contribute to the campaigns of legislators who support the association’s goals,” says Runci. “As Congress grapples with major changes to the tax code that could impact both jewelers and the consumers who buy jewelry products, JAPAC is needed more than ever.”

“Already this year, Jewelers of America has had to contend with luxury tax proposals on the state level, the introduction of a possible national repeal of the LIFO inventory accounting method, and other threats,” Runci continues. “In addition, we are pushing hard for a re-introduction of Sales Tax Fairness legislation, so that Internet sellers, as well as Main Street retailers, are required to collect sales taxes.

“Each of these efforts requires the jewelry industry to present its case before legislators who are being approached by countless industry groups looking for attention. JAPAC gives jewelers a voice in Washington, and an opportunity to get on to the radar screens of legislators,” says Runci.

The JAPAC Board is structured in two-year terms, to coincide with election cycles. Board members’ terms commence in 2009 and will expire at the end of 2010. They are charged with generating support and fundraising for JAPAC.

“It is particularly at times of economic distress that the jewelry industry needs a strong, vital and collective voice to defend our interests in Washington,” says Farmer. “I’m delighted to once again serve as JAPAC’s Chair, and welcome my colleagues who have joined us in this important work.”

About JAPAC

The Jewelers of America Political Action Committee (JAPAC) was established in accordance with the Federal Campaign Act, and is strictly regulated by the Federal Election Commission. Contributions can only be made by individuals affiliated with Jewelers of America or its members, and are completely voluntary. The amount given or the refusal to give will not benefit or disadvantage any individual in his or her relationship with Jewelers of America or its members. JAPAC files regular reports of receipts and disbursements with the FEC.

About Jewelers of America:

Jewelers of America is the national trade association for businesses serving the fine jewelry retail marketplace, representing 11,000 member stores. Jewelers of America's primary purpose is to improve consumer confidence in the jewelry industry by: serving as a forum for discussion and analysis of issues; playing a leadership role in public, government and industry affairs; advocating professionalism, including high ethical, social and environmental standards; and facilitating members' access to education. For more information about Jewelers of America, visit www.jewelers.org.

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For more information, contact the Public Affairs Department:

Peggy Jo Donahue
Director of Public Affairs
pidonahue@jewelers.org
(646) 658-5802

Susan Thea Posnock
Public Affairs Manager
sposnock@jewelers.org
(646) 658-5806