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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JA LAUNCHES J-BIZ, A NEW EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Enhanced education program will make quality education easily accessible to retail jewelers

New York, NY – Jewelers of America is launching an ambitious new initiative in member and industry education. The initiative, dubbed “J-Biz,” was developed by a task force of JA members and staff over the past fourteen months, and represents a major shift for JA in the evolution of both program content and delivery.

JA President and CEO Matthew Runci announced today that the association’s Executive Committee has approved a plan to fund the development of this enhanced education program in the coming years. “Clearly, the future success of retail jewelers is tied to education – for both store owners and their staffs,” Runci says. “The development of J-Biz will meet that need by providing more quality education programs that are more accessible to more JA members than ever before.”

According to Runci, JA will work with others in the industry to provide quality content. “We don’t want to duplicate what already exists,” he continues. “Our objective is to meet our members’ education needs in these areas through partnerships with other associations and industry educators to adapt the best existing programs to this effort and to develop new programs when needed.”

Originally titled, “Smart Business,” the J-Biz project grew out of discussions at the 2005 JA Affiliate Leadership Conference in Washington on how to expand participation in educational programs. “JA’s mission statement makes it clear that providing members with access to meaningful education programs is one of our key objectives,” notes JA Chairman John

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Cohen, of Carlyle & Co., Greensboro, NC. “We want JA to be the source of assistance and information for our members when it comes to meeting their education needs.”

At the center of this important effort is the development of multiple delivery methods for the education programs: in-person, online, or at home/in store. JA Director of Education David Peters explains: “We recognize that different people learn in different ways, and that many JA members have only limited access to in-person programs. So, we are working on ways to present the same education program in different formats.”

The J-Biz Task Force’s final report was approved by the JA Board of Directors at its meeting in July. The report was also discussed at this year’s JA Affiliate Leadership Conference during the JANY Summer Show in New York. More information will also be provided to members on the JA website (www.jewelers.org) and in upcoming issues of the *J Report*, JA’s member newsletter.

The J-Biz Task Force is comprised of: Robert La Perla, of La Perla Limited, West Hartford, CT (Connecticut Jewelers Assn.); Robert Marks, of Rogers Jewelry, Modesto, CA (California Jewelers Assn.); Artie Bennos, of Simms II Jewelers, Winchester, MA (JA Board of Directors); JA Treasurer Michael White, of White’s Jewelers, Springfield, TN; Bill Blair, executive director of Missouri Jewelers and Watchmakers Assn.; Sandy Brown, executive director of New England Jewelers Assn; JA Director of Education David Peters; and JA Vice President David Lafleur. Robert Leaver, of New Commons, Providence, RI, was the facilitator for the Task Force’s work.

For more information about Jewelers of America, visit www.jewelers.org.

*Jewelers of America is the national trade association for retail jewelers.
With more than 11,000 members, JA also works locally through its 40 state and regional affiliates.
JA advocates high social, ethical, and environmental standards, promotes professional
business and leadership skills, and enhances its members’ profitability by
offering education, certification, marketing and cost-saving programs.*

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