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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**Dick Lapanen Joins Higginbotham to Lead Employee Benefits Practice**

*Lapanen to Develop Firm's Group Health Production in Austin*

AUSTIN, Texas (July 26, 2010)—Higginbotham & Associates, one of the nation's largest regional independent insurance brokers, has appointed Dick Lapanen executive vice president at its Austin office. Lapanen brings more than 24 years experience in operations management and new business development with the last 17 years in the employee benefits marketplace. He will use those talents to expand the firm's employee benefits production in Austin.

“Companywide, Higginbotham's practice is split almost evenly between property and casualty insurance and employee benefits. With Dick, we want to tap those employee benefit resources and make them available to our Austin clients,” said Curtis Page, managing director for Higginbotham in Austin. “Dick has a track record of above-average sales that promises to drive our employee benefits growth.”

Higginbotham brokers health, life, disability, retirement, compensation and voluntary worksite plans for employer groups of up to 3,000 employees. It also provides TPA services including health risk management, employee communications, HR technology, employee response and Section 125 Plan administration.

Lapanen joins Higginbotham from Aon Consulting in Austin where he led the Employee Benefits Consulting division. During his 15-year tenure at Aon, he was promoted from business development to manager of business development to senior vice president. Before then, Dick was a group health benefits account executive at New York Life/Sanus and a managed care benefits



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account executive at Travelers Health Network of Texas, Inc., both in Austin. He attended Ball State University and Indiana University.

Lepanen has served as a board member for the Austin Health Underwriters Association and ambassador to the Austin Chamber of Commerce for three years. He founded the Austin Kidney Foundation for Children and volunteers with Hospice of Austin.

**About Higginbotham & Associates**

Higginbotham serves as a single source for insurance, risk management and financial services by providing access to commercial and personal property/casualty coverage, employee benefits, retirement plans, life insurance and executive compensation through more than 250 regional and national carriers. The Texas-based firm was founded in 1948 and is headquartered in Fort Worth with 12 additional statewide offices. It ranks as one of the nation's 100 largest independent insurance brokerage firms based on revenue (*Business Insurance, July 2009*). Visit [www.higginbotham.net](http://www.higginbotham.net) for more information.

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