

For Immediate Release
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**Alter Moneta Announces Bear Stearns Merchant Banking to Join Caisse de
dépôt et placement du Québec as a Major Shareholder**
*Strategic Alliance Will Enable Monitor 100 Independent to Expand Its Presence
in North America*

Montréal, Québec, December 11, 2006—Alter Moneta, an equipment finance specialist headquartered in Montréal, Quebec, has announced a strategic change in shareholder ownership. Bear Stearns Merchant Banking (“BSMB”) has agreed to acquire a controlling interest in Alter Moneta, subject to certain Canadian regulatory approvals.

Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec (“Caisse”), a leading investment fund who manages, on behalf of its depositors, assets under management of over \$CDN 122 billion, has been a major shareholder of Alter Moneta since its inception and has helped to build the company’s franchise to what it is today. Caisse will remain as one of the main shareholders within the new organization. “We are proud of the growth demonstrated by Alter Moneta since our initial investment in this dynamic organization” states Paul-Henri Couture, Senior Vice President, Investments of Caisse. “In concert with BSMB, we maintain an enduring confidence in Alter Moneta’s continued capacity to expand and thrive within the equipment finance marketplace.”

Alter Moneta’s existing management team will remain in place and Tom Wajnert, senior advisor to BSMB for commercial finance, will assume the role of Executive Chairman. A 30-year industry veteran known for his innovative leadership, Mr. Wajnert founded and headed AT&T Capital Corporation for 13 years, which was one of the largest publicly traded global equipment leasing and finance companies. Mr. Wajnert led the transaction to take the company private in 1996 as well as the subsequent sale of the company in 1997. He has also served as chairman of the Equipment Leasing and Finance Association.

“Our primary motivations for electing to join forces with BSMB are their considerable capital strength, and Tom Wajnert’s proven knowledge and experience within our industry,” says Mark Lempko, General Manager of the US Equipment Finance Division. “With BSMB, we now have significant capital representation in the U.S., in tandem with our existing representation in Canada with Caisse—affirming our strong cross-border orientation.”

“In 2007, we anticipate that approximately 60 percent of our total originations will come from the U.S.,” says Alter Moneta CEO Alain Savard. “Capital is the essence of any financial services organization,” he adds. “By teaming with BSMB, we have a partner with broad experience in the financial services sector. We plan to expand our geographic footprint beyond the east coast of the U.S. and the eastern provinces of Canada.” Alter Moneta also plans to double its employee roster to serve an expanding customer base.

“Alter Moneta is an impressive company and a great place to work,” Wajnert says. “The company established itself quickly and has grown into a major North American player during a time that has been difficult for the industry. Management has recruited people of the highest caliber and managed their organic growth exceptionally well.” Wajnert notes that Alter Moneta’s success was accelerated by its acquisition of HSBC’s U.S. leasing operations in 2003 and of Lutex Leasing Inc. in 2005.

As of September 30, 2006, Alter Moneta had an equipment finance portfolio in excess of \$US 1 billion, including freight transportation, construction, manufacturing, passenger transportation, and a variety of commercial equipment. The company maintains its Lutex vehicle leasing operation in a separate facility in greater Montréal and its U.S. origination and customer service platform in Buffalo, N.Y.

“Beyond Alter Moneta’s ability to thrive in any market, what is most impressive to me is management’s focus on empowering their people,” Wajnert says. “Alter Moneta is a flat, performance-based, people-centric organization, with an enlightened approach to bringing good people together—and enabling them to do the best things for their company and for their customers.”

“We count on our people to be the drivers of what makes our business better,” Lempko says. “From our customer service group to our leadership team, we abide by a continuous process improvement philosophy and take a ‘high touch’ approach to our customers. When linked with our industry knowledge and ongoing investment in technology, we offer a distinct value proposition to our market—one that will be only enhanced by our partnership with BSMB and Caisse.”

About Alter Moneta

Alter Moneta, headquartered in Montréal, Québec, was established in 1998 as a *de novo* asset-based equipment finance company with the backing of Caisse. Today, it is one of the fastest-growing independent lease originators in the mid-market equipment finance industry in North America. The company provides collateralized lending, financing and leasing services to middle-market businesses, in the trucking and warehousing, construction, manufacturing, and services industries. The company lends against and finances a wide range of new and used revenue-producing, essential-use equipment including cranes,

trailers, and trucks. More information about Alter Moneta can be found at www.altermoneta.com.

About BSMB

BSMB invests private equity capital in compelling leveraged buyouts, recapitalizations and growth capital opportunities alongside superior management teams. BSMB focuses on making control or entrepreneur-driven investments, principally in middle-market financial services, retail, and consumer products companies. Since its formation in 1997, BSMB has been an investor in over 50 portfolio companies. BSMB manages nearly \$5 billion of private equity capital, including its new \$2.7 billion institutional fund and capital dedicated to its affiliate, Bear Growth Capital Partners. Current BSMB portfolio companies include: ACA Capital Holdings, Balducci's, CamelBak Products, Cavalry Investments, Churchill Financial Holdings, Multi Packaging Solutions, New York & Company, Seven For All Mankind, Stuart Weitzman, Transamerican Auto Parts Company and The Vitamin Shoppe. More information about BSMB can be found at www.bsmb.com.

About Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec

The Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec, created in 1965 by an Act of the National Assembly of Québec, is an institution that actively manages funds on behalf of its depositors, in accordance with their investment policies. Caisse is the largest institutional fund manager in Canada and one of Québec's leading financial institutions. Caisse invests in Canada as well as internationally and conducts its operations from its business office in Montréal and its head office in Québec City. More information about Caisse can be found at www.lacaisse.com.