

BACKTRACK NAMED ONE OF THE NATION'S FASTEST GROWING COMPANIES BY INC MAGAZINE

Mentor, OH – BackTrack, based in Mentor, OH, has been named one of America's entrepreneurial growth leaders by *Inc* magazine, which today released its annual ranking of the *Inc 500*, the nation's fastest-growing private companies.

Started in 1982, the *Inc 500* ranks the nation's leading entrepreneurial firms according to sales growth over the previous five years. Former *Inc 500* companies that have gone on to become household names include Microsoft, Timberland, Domino's Pizza and Patagonia. This year's *Inc 500* set records in terms of both collective sales and growth rates, racking up a collective total of \$12.5 billion in sales and an average 5-year growth rate of almost 2,000 percent.

BackTrack, a pre-employment screening company, began operations in 1994 and has grown very rapidly. The firm, located in a 15,000 square foot facility, employs 60 people. A growth rate of 835 percent over the past five years qualified the company for inclusion in this national ranking, coming in at number 359.

"Checking the backgrounds of potential new employees has taken on a new urgency in the minds of employers since September 11th," states BackTrack CEO Bob Gandee.

California is once again home to the greatest number of *Inc 500* businesses this year (59), followed by New York (33). Massachusetts and Texas tied for third place, each having 29 ranked companies, followed by Virginia (27) and Florida (26). New York City, meanwhile, is the metro area with the greatest number of *Inc 500* companies, with 39 located there, followed by Washington, D.C. (31), Boston (30), San Francisco (26) and Chicago (24). Ohio is home to 17 *Inc 500* companies this year.

Among the key trends: *Inc 500* enterprises are dramatically larger than they were 10 years ago, with an average of 160 employees, compared with just 61 employees on average in 1991. In existence an average of eight years, 56 percent were started at home, approximately 63 percent of which had five or less employees when they moved from home. About 50 percent were started with an investment of \$20,000 or less, and 15 percent were started with less than \$1000. The companies as a group generated a total of 80,188 jobs and some 76 percent of the *Inc 500* companies were profitable in 2000.

Reflecting the technology boom in the past five years, the largest percentage (38%) of the *Inc 500* companies were in "computer software and services" followed by "diversified services," such as human resources and advertising, (21%). Telecommunications was a distant third with 5 percent.

"The *Inc 500* gives America a window on the future – which companies will be the Microsofts and Timberlands of tomorrow," said George Gendron, *Inc* editor-in-chief. "The economy may have slowed, but entrepreneurial enterprises have always been,

and will continue to be, the nation's foremost, engine of growth and job creation.”

To be eligible for this year's ***Inc 500***, companies had to be independent and privately held through 2000, have at least \$200,000 in sales the base year of 1996, and their 2000 sales had to have exceeded 1999 sales. Holding companies, regulated banks and utilities are not eligible. ***Inc*** verifies all information using tax forms and financial statements from certified public accountants and by conducting interviews with company officials.

Founded in 1979, Boston-based ***Inc*** magazine was acquired last year by G + J USA, one of America's largest magazine publishers and is part of the company's newly-formed Business Innovator Group. G + J USA also publishes *Fast Company*, *Rosie*, *Child*, *Family Circle*, *Fitness*, *Homestyle*, *Parents*, and *YM*. The company is 25.1 percent owned by the Jahr Group and 74.9 percent owned by Bertelsmann AG, the largest privately held and the fifth largest media company in the world with yearly revenues at \$16 billion.