



NEWS RELEASE **For Immediate Release**

THE RLJ COMPANIES ANNOUNCES FORMATION OF SMALL BUSINESS INVESTMENT COMPANY IN COOPERATION WITH THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

RLJ Credit Opportunity Attracts Investments from Major Banks to Lend Money to Small Businesses

BETHESDA, MD// JULY 11, 2012//Robert L. Johnson, Founder and Chairman of The RLJ Companies, today announced that RLJ Credit Opportunity Fund, an RLJ portfolio company, has received a license from the United States Small Business Administration (SBA) to operate as a Small Business Investment Company (SBIC).

“The launch of the SBIC is a continuation of The RLJ Companies’ strategy to become a preeminent business in financial asset management,” said Johnson. “I am delighted that leading banks – Deutsche Bank; SunTrust; Wells Fargo; and Northern Trust – have invested in RLJ’s fund, which is designed to provide much needed access to financing for minority and small businesses across the country. The relationship with our partner banks demonstrates that banks are willing to invest in minority companies that can generate superior returns and help meet their Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) goals. The fund, under the leadership of Trevor Gregg, will undoubtedly provide positive lending benefits to minority and small businesses and support the SBA's lending objectives,” Johnson concluded.

The fund will launch with approximately \$70 million of committed capital, with the goal of raising a total of \$225 million in capital to deploy.

“The SBIC program is an attractive partnership between the government and the private sector, promoting the health and competitiveness of the U.S. economy by utilizing efficient capital market solutions,” said Trevor Gregg, Managing Partner, RLJ Credit Opportunity Fund. “We are delighted to have such strong partners as the SBA and our initial group of major banks,” he concluded.

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About The RLJ Companies: *The RLJ Companies, founded by Robert L. Johnson, is an innovative business network that provides strategic investments in a diverse portfolio of companies. Within The RLJ Companies portfolio, Johnson owns or holds interests in businesses operating in a publicly traded hotel real estate investment trust; private equity; financial services; asset management; insurance services; automobile dealerships; sports and entertainment; and video lottery terminal (VLT) gaming. The RLJ Companies is headquartered in Bethesda, MD, with affiliate operations in Charlotte, NC; Little Rock, AR; Los Angeles, CA; San Juan, PR; and Monrovia, Liberia. Prior to founding The RLJ Companies, Johnson was founder and chairman of Black Entertainment Television (BET). For more information visit www.rljcompanies.com.*

(more)

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About RLJ Credit Opportunity Fund, LLC: *RLJ Credit Opportunity Fund makes senior debt and subordinated debt investments in lower middle market companies. RLJ Credit provides flexible capital solutions to facilitate buyouts, recapitalizations, refinancings, and growth financings. The Principals of RLJ Credit have extensive experience partnering with middle market companies, across a broad range of industries, to support growth and create value. We successfully partner with private equity firms, investment banks, and operating executives to deliver our full range of financial and strategic resources.*

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