

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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FOR MORE INFORMATION
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HOWARD TAFT JOINS AZTEC GROUP AS SENIOR MANAGING DIRECTOR

Miami, Florida -- Ezra Katz, Chairman of Aztec Group, Inc., a full service real estate investment and merchant banking firm, is pleased to announce that Howard Taft has joined as Senior Managing Director. Mr. Taft brings more than 30 years of successful real estate financing and sales experience to Aztec Group.

Mr. Taft has been responsible for managing the origination, analysis and placement of real estate debt and equity throughout the United States. To date, he has successfully closed over \$3 billion in real estate transactions. His principal role within Aztec Group will be to originate and manage funds to provide gap equity/mezzanine financing, joint ventures and preferred equity for acquisition and refinancing of existing properties, including note purchases. His combined experience in arranging and/or providing funds as a principal will be crucial to implement new and insightful strategies for financing of commercial real estate transactions – created by today's unsettled economy and shaped by the commotion in the capital markets.

Prior to joining Aztec Group, Mr. Taft was Managing Director of Cohen Financial's Miami office, as well as Senior Managing Director at Holiday Fenoglio Fowler (HFF) in Coral Gables. He is a Licensed Florida Real Estate Broker and Licensed Florida Mortgage Broker and a member of the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP); International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC); Advisory Board of the University of Florida; Warrington College of Business; former President of Florida Association of Mortgage Brokers and current member of Mortgage Bankers Association.

Taft will be joined by Charles Penan, whose responsibilities will include underwriting, loan packaging and marketing of Debt and Equity Transactions.

Founded in 1981, Aztec Group, Inc. specializes in facilitating the acquisition, disposition, financing and capital needs of real estate projects for institutional investors, entrepreneurs and commercial developers as well as off shore clients. The Company has long been recognized as the premier real estate capital markets intermediary and merchant banking firm in the Southeast, handling over \$8 billion in transactions during the past decade. The Company is also considered an innovator, often seeing opportunities for clients before they become apparent in the marketplace.

The diverse institutional and developmental background of Aztec Group's team of skilled, market-wise professionals is now further enhanced by the addition of Howard Taft, a high caliber industry performer.

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