
News

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Subject: Reply® Wireless Response Systems Manufacturer Recognized as U.S.A.'s
ESOP Company of the Year

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

On May 17, 2006, **Fleetwood Group, Inc.** – the world's leading designer and manufacturer of purpose-built radio frequency (RF) keypads for audience response and electronic voting applications – was honored by the ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan) Association as the winner of the National 2006 Company of the Year award. Earlier on March 30, the company received the Association's recognition as the top employee stock owned company in the State of Michigan.

Nationally, there are approximately 11,000 ESOPs in place in the U.S.A., covering 10 million employees (or 10% of the private sector workforce).¹ While ESOPs are in all industries, over 25% of them are in the manufacturing sector.² Fleetwood is a 100% employee-owned company, one of only 2,000 such organizations in the U.S.A.³

Doug Ruch, Fleetwood's CEO and an ESOP Trustee, said: "It's an honor for Fleetwood to receive this award. We are confident that employee ownership is consistent with our Christ-centered approach to doing business and the right way to structure an organization. We are also convinced that employee ownership is the best way to compete in a global marketplace."

The ESOP Association's vision that employee ownership improves American competitiveness and increases productivity through greater employee participation in the workplace is certainly evident in Fleetwood. "As owners of a U.S.-based manufacturing company that's competing globally, we're motivated to press forward with new products and improved ways of selling them. We can't risk becoming like so many American companies who recently found themselves unable to remain

NEWS: Fleetwood Named Company of the Year by ESOP Association

competitive in the new economy. So there's this persistent buzz around here to fulfill our obligations to our customers, vendors, community, and each other." said Pat Moody, Vice President of Sales and Marketing and an ESOP Trustee. He added: "For example, more than two-thirds of our electronics product portfolio is less than two years old. Over 20% of our audience response and interactive voting system sales are to Europe and Asia. Plus, we've broken sales records two years in a row. That's an achievement that would have been impossible without a commitment by this entire organization to invest in R&D and sell in competitive markets."

Fleetwood contributes to the owners that have built the company's financial position – and every full-time team member is an owner. Since the ESOP was formed in 1975, Fleetwood has contributed over \$6.3 million to individual retirement accounts of its Team Member Owners. Rick Kooiker, Fleetwood's Human Resources Manager, noted: "We create an environment that promotes a positive experience and allows everyone to make a contribution. Our belief is that it is essential for us to pay attention to the way in which we work together, the culture we create, and the mutual objectives we share."

Founded in 1955, Fleetwood continues a rich heritage today of investing a generous portion of its corporate profits into Christian causes throughout the world that perform disaster relief, education, media publishing, mission support, and more. In 2006, over \$800,000 was contributed to this effort. To date, over \$5.5 million has been gifted.

Staffed with radio frequency experts and equipped for surface mount technique (SMT) manufacturing, this small Michigan company makes a big impact worldwide – especially in niche markets that demand electronic voting systems, focus group tools, group decision support systems, and student assessment devices. Fleetwood's Electronics Division designs, manufactures, markets, and manages the value-added distribution of several product lines of interactive meeting and learning tools. Its flagship product – the Reply ® Wireless Audience Response/Voting System (more info: www.replysystems.com) – consists of cordless electronic keypads and audience polling software. Reply® systems are commonly used in conferences and seminars, classrooms, focus group facilities, TV studios, and special event venues to quickly survey and report the opinions and/or knowledge of participants.

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^{1, 2, 3} For further information concerning the ESOP facts and figures, please call The ESOP Association at 202-293-2971 or visit www.esopassociation.org.

For more information about Fleetwood and its electronic meeting and learning products, please visit www.fleetwoodgroup.com. Or call 616-396-1142 (or 800-257-6390 toll-free in USA). Give us a call!

Let's Interact!®



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