For Immediate Release

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ASHTON-TATE ANNOUNCES LETTER OF INTENT TO ACQUIRE MAJORITY INTEREST IN INTERBASE SOFTWARE CORPORATION

TORRANCE, Calif., March 17, 1989 -- Ashton-Tate Corporation (NASDAQ: TATE) today announced it has signed a letter of intent to acquire majority interest in Interbase Software Corporation of Bedford, Mass., a privately held company.

Founded in 1984, Interbase develops and markets the InterBase database management system for minicomputers from DEC, Sun, Apollo and others running under VMS, Ultrix and the UNIX operating systems.

Ashton-Tate, developers and marketers of the dBASE database management systems for IBM and compatible personal computers, previously had acquired a minority interest in Interbase as part of a joint technology agreement announced in April 1988.

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"With this increase in our equity position in Interbase, we will continue to help grow the company with its present product line while adapting elements of its advanced technology into Ashton-Tate products for millions of users," said Edward M. Esber, Jr., chairman and chief executive officer of Ashton-Tate Corporation.

Ashton-Tate made the announcement to financial community analysts invited to a briefing today in Los Angeles.

"Our experience with Interbase as a partner has been excellent. They will operate as a business unit under the present management in place," said Ashton-Tate President Luther J. Nussbaum. "We expect to purchase any outstanding Interbase shares at a later date."

Interbase President James Starkey said, "Ashton-Tate has been a boost to our growth as a minority investor. We expect the new relationship to help us realize our goal of delivering the database and workstation technology for the 1990s. Ashton-Tate's financial and strategic leadership will help us expand our technological leadership in On-Line Complex Processing (OLCP) applications. We look forward to bringing our technology to millions of Ashton-Tate users."

Officials of both companies said that Interbase technology complements that of Sybase, a company in which Ashton-Tate holds a minority interest as well. Sybase produced the basic technology for the Ashton-Tate/Microsoft SQL Server database server due for commercial release next month.

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"Interbase and Sybase provide the only SQL database alternatives appropriate for use on a personal computer," said Joseph F. Brilando, vice-president of corporate strategy and marketing for Ashton-Tate. "Sybase is optimized for On-Line Transaction Processing on local area networks while Interbase is architected for On-Line Complex Processing workstations."

Brilando said that only Interbase and Sybase offer "stored procedures and embedded triggers" which automatically enforce business rules and allow users access to complex applications without requiring personal knowledge of concurrency and database integrity issues.

"This technology is essential for personal computing as we build products for millions of people," Brilando said.

Interbase database technology is designed currently for database environments characterized by a high degree of data sharing among multi-vendor networks, complex data such as CAD images or text, and large volumes of accessible data. The distributed data sharing and complex data type handling capabilities are some of the key reasons behind Ashton-Tate interest in Interbase's technology.

"We believe that Interbase is at least two years ahead of Oracle in the OLCP technology," Brilando added.

In April 1988, Ashton-Tate said that the two companies were working together to develop components of future workstation products, including an OS/2 Presentation Manager version of the dBASE database management system.

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Based in Torrance, Calif., Ashton-Tate markets best-selling microcomputer business applications software for DOS, OS/2 and Macintosh environments. Products are available in six major categories: database management systems, word processing, graphics, integrated decision-support software, spreadsheets and desktop publishing. The Company offers a variety of software applications, tools and utilities under the Tate Publishing software label, as well as a library of best-selling computer hardware and software-related books and periodicals. Ashton-Tate also markets a comprehensive line of service and support programs for individuals, corporations and government agencies.

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