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ASHTON-TATE APPLAUDS CHANNEL EFFORTS
AS DEMAND FOR dBASE FAMILY REMAINS STRONG

TORRANCE, Calif., November 20, 1989 -- Ashton-Tate Corporation (NASDAQ:TATE) Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer, Edward M. Esber, Jr., today said he is pleased with recent sales strength of the dBASE product family, crediting the company's distribution channel partners with generating strong end user demand for dBASE IV and dBASE III PLUS during the past year.

"Although Ashton-Tate has reported declines in overall revenue during the last two quarters, the primary reason has been our efforts with our channel partners to reduce channel inventory," said Esber. "Sales of our flagship database products, dBASE IV and dBASE III PLUS, by our channel partners to end users have remained strong during this period."

The company calculates sell-through value based on estimated distributor and reseller unit sales at Ashton-Tate's average revenue per unit. Distributors and resellers report their sell-through to Ashton-Tate, and on this basis, and based on the best information available, the company estimates that worldwide dollar sell-through value of dBASE IV and dBASE III PLUS has averaged approximately \$46 million per quarter for the first

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three quarters of 1989, versus an average of approximately \$37 million per quarter for the comparable period in 1988.

"Earlier this year, we cautioned the market that a significant decline in dBASE product sales could occur as we approached initial shipment of dBASE IV, Version 1.1. However, it appears that our customers have confidence in the dBASE standard and are expanding their use of the dBASE family for data management applications. We are also very pleased with the favorable early feedback from the Version 1.1 beta program." Esber added. "We cannot accurately predict dBASE family sales between now and the release of dBASE IV, Version 1.1, but our channel partners are being very supportive."

Distributors Enjoy Strong Sales

"From indications we receive, dBASE IV and dBASE III PLUS continue to be the two top selling database management packages in the world by a more than 5:1 margin over the nearest competitor," Esber asserted. "Week after week, these products appear on the best sellers lists of many U.S. and international distributors and resellers."

Concurring are the bi-weekly top sellers lists of two of the largest U.S. distributors of microcomputer software, California's Ingram Micro D Inc. of Santa Ana, and Softsel Computer Products, Inc. of Inglewood. dBASE III PLUS has appeared on both lists longer than any other microcomputer software package. dBASE IV has held a spot on the Softsel list for 50 consecutive weeks and the Ingram Micro D list for 48 consecutive weeks since its launch

last year.

"dBASE IV has maintained a strong position on the Softsel Hot List from the time the product first began shipping last year," said Robert S. Leff, Softsel's Co-Chairman. "That is the clearest evidence of end user demand that I know."

David R. Dukes, Ingram Micro D President and Chief Operating officer, echoed Softsel's comments. "dBASE IV has sold well since its introduction," said Dukes. "It has consistently been among our top selling business software products for 48 consecutive weeks, and is currently among the top ten best sellers. As for dBASE III PLUS, it has been on our best seller list for a durable 125 weeks. Clearly, demand for these two products is strong, and we expect it to continue."

dBASE Family Paces Reseller Database Sales

Resellers have also enjoyed consistent demand for the two dBASE versions. In its current fiscal year, Egghead Discount Software of Issaquah, Washington, one of the nation's largest microcomputer software resellers, reports a twenty percent increase in its sales of Ashton-Tate's database products over the previous year.

SOFTWARE MAGAZINE develops a monthly ranking of corporate best-sellers based on end user (sell-through) sales data from resellers Corporate Software of Westwood, Massachusetts, ASAP Software Express of Northbrook, Illinois and Software Spectrum of Dallas, Texas. dBASE IV has appeared on the list each of the last 11 months since its initial shipment.

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"Our resellers and distributors have done an outstanding job of selling the unique features of dBASE IV," said John Fraissinet, Ashton-Tate's Vice President of Channel sales. "Their commitment to our partnership has kept dBASE IV and dBASE III PLUS at the top of the U.S. microcomputer database software market."

Success Around the World

Ashton-Tate's international executives report a robust dBASE market overseas as well, thanks to what they term an enthusiastic reception of dBASE IV. To date, the company's 1989 database revenues in Europe have increased more than 50 percent over the corresponding period in 1988, according to Floyd Bradley, Ashton-Tate's Vice President, Europe.

"dBASE IV has been an overwhelming success in the European market," Bradley said. "Although dBASE III PLUS continues to sell well here, dBASE IV is outselling its predecessor by a 2:1 margin."

Ashton-Tate refers to large dBASE IV contracts with the Australian Tax Board, the Hong Kong Government and the Petrobras oil company in Brazil as "just a sample" of the widespread adoption of dBASE IV in many international markets.

"We've seen tremendous customer demand for dBASE IV from Asia to Canada to South America," said Ashton-Tate's Vice President, International, Peter Boot. "Few products in the history of our industry have enjoyed such worldwide acceptance."

Sales Backed By Awards, Recognition

Esber said the industry shouldn't be surprised by the strength of demand for the dBASE family. "dBASE IV alone has won seven prestigious awards around the world (see attachment #1), has been ranked at the top of 1989 SOFTWARE DIGEST (Volume 6, Number 2) and PC WEEK (September 25, 1989, page 70) dBASE-compatible product tests, and has fared well in several other market studies.

"The dBASE standard is solid," Esber concluded. "I wish we had a hundred products with the sales strength of dBASE IV."

Headquartered in Torrance, California, Ashton-Tate markets microcomputer business applications software for the DOS, OS/2 and Macintosh operating systems. The company offers products in five major categories: database management systems, word processing, integrated decision support software, spreadsheets and graphics. Ashton-Tate also markets a comprehensive line of service and support programs for individuals, corporations and government agencies.

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