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Press Releases

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Ameritech Library Services to be acquired by 21st Century Group and Green Leaf Ridge Co.

PROVO, Utah -- Ameritech Library Services (ALS), 21st Century Group, LLC, and Green Leaf Ridge, LLC today announced an agreement under which Ameritech, a company of SBC Communications, Inc., will sell ALS to a private investment group led by 21st Century Group and Green Leaf Ridge Company. The transaction is subject to approval by the SBC Communications Board of Directors.

Ameritech Library Services, the world leader in library automation, supports more than 7,600 customer libraries worldwide with a broad spectrum of sophisticated software and hardware solutions that are service-oriented and Internet-enabled. The company will be renamed and will adopt a new logo, reflecting its new ownership, in the near future.

Lana Porter, president and CEO of ALS, and the ALS executive management team will continue to direct the company. "The management team is very excited with the opportunities this acquisition offers for the company and for our customers," said Porter. "Over a year ago, we began a comprehensive business review to identify our best course forward to grow the company in its market leadership position. We determined that as a privately owned, independent company, we could accelerate development of leading-edge products and services for our customers and for the library marketplace."

John Ware, president of 21st Century Group, said, "The acquisition of Ameritech Library Services is an outstanding investment for 21st Century Group and for our new partners at Green Leaf Ridge. The business is the clear leader in the library technology sector and we believe that we will be able to grow the business both internally and through add-on acquisitions. In the near term, we are excited about the opportunity to work with Lana Porter and her team to develop a new brand and identity for the company. We expect that this effort, combined with several other important initiatives, will be a catalyst for significant growth in the future."

team in the acquisition of this outstanding library technology company," said Percy Berger, president and CEO of Green Leaf Ridge Company. "The ALS executive management and staff impressed us from the start with their far-reaching vision for and commitment to the library marketplace. They have consistently demonstrated sound judgement and solid financial results in directing the company. ALS combines a long tradition of excellence in library software solutions and services with creative new technologies for libraries in an Internet-connected world."

The acquisition, which is expected to be completed by the end of the year, includes all ALS global offices and its more than 520 employees. The company headquarters remains in Provo, Utah. ALS plans to continue its steady growth during 2000 resulting in hiring additional employees throughout the world.

Ameritech Library Services (www.amlibs.com), a subsidiary of Ameritech, was formed in 1994 with the purchase and merger of Dynix, Inc. and NOTIS Systems. ALS's library information management systems meet the needs of research, academic, public, corporate, medical, law, and K-12 school libraries. Headquartered in Utah, Ameritech Library Services has offices in Illinois and Canada and throughout Europe and the Pacific Rim.

21st Century Group, LLC is an ethnic-minority-controlled partnership formed in August 1998 by former Dallas City Manager John Ware and Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst Incorporated, a leading private equity firm based in Dallas. It invests in medium-size businesses in the manufacturing, distribution, service, and media industries where value can be increased through improved and expanded operations and add-on acquisitions.

Green Leaf Ridge Company, LLC, based in Chicago, was formed to acquire, control, and operate with management businesses that offer excellent growth opportunities with a focus on technology and information services.

Since its formation in 1989, Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst Incorporated has completed or currently has pending more than 300 transactions with a total capital value in excess of \$37 billion. Headquartered in Dallas, the firm also has offices in New York, London, Mexico City and Buenos Aires.

Berenson Minella & Company acted as financial advisor to Ameritech Corporation in connection with this transaction.

Ameritech is the premier provider of communications services in the Upper Midwest, with 13 million customers and more than 21 million access lines across Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin. It is a company of SBC Communications Inc. (www.sbc.com), a global communications leader. Through its trusted brands – Southwestern Bell, Ameritech, Pacific Bell, SBC Telecom, Nevada Bell, SNET and Cellular One—and world-class network, SBC provides local and long-distance phone service, wireless and data communications, paging, high-speed Internet access and messaging, cable and satellite television, security services and telecommunications equipment, as well as directory advertising and publishing. In the United States, the company currently has 87.3 million voice grade equivalent lines, 10.3 million wireless customers, and is undertaking a national expansion program that will bring SBC service to an additional 30 markets. Internationally, SBC has telecommunications investments in 22 countries. With more than 200,000 employees, SBC is the 14th largest employer in the U.S., with annual revenues that rank it among the largest Fortune 500 companies.