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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Hortica alerting public to loss of backup tapes**

(Edwardsville, IL – Friday, April 6, 2007) Florists' Mutual Insurance Company (Hortica), an Illinois-based provider of employee benefits and insurance to companies in the horticultural industry, today announced that a locked shipping case containing magnetic backup tapes cannot be located. Hortica believes that the backup tapes contained personal information including names, Social Security numbers, drivers' license numbers, and/or bank account numbers.

The locked shipping case was being transported by UPS from a secure offsite facility to the company's Illinois headquarters. UPS informed Hortica that the shipping case could not be located, and Hortica has been working with UPS in an attempt to locate the case. On April 5, 2007, UPS notified Hortica that all internal recovery processes had been exhausted and the shipping case could not be located.

Hortica is continuing its investigation of this incident and is working with various law enforcement agencies to locate the shipping case. A possibility remains that the shipping case may be found within UPS's shipping or another storage facility.

“UPS and law enforcement agencies have no evidence to indicate an unauthorized individual has possession of the tapes,” said Robert McClellan, president and chief executive officer. “It is important for customers to note that these tapes cannot be read without specific computer equipment and software.” Mr. McClellan said Hortica has since altered its backup tape storage procedures so shipment of backup tapes by common carrier is no longer required.

No unusual activity involving customer information has been reported to the company. However, Hortica recommends that people possibly affected by this incident take the following steps to protect themselves:

1. Remain vigilant by reviewing account statements and immediately report any suspicious activity.
2. Place a fraud alert on credit files by calling the three national credit reporting agencies at the following information: Experian - 888-397-3742; Equifax - 800-525-6285; TransUnion - 800-680-7289. A fraud alert lets creditors know to

contact you before opening new accounts. More information regarding fraud alerts is available on [www.AnnualCreditReport.com](http://www.AnnualCreditReport.com).

3. Periodically check credit reports from each of the consumer reporting agencies listed above. Receive a free credit report by going to [www.hortica-insurance.com](http://www.hortica-insurance.com) and click on [www.AnnualCreditReport.com](http://www.AnnualCreditReport.com). If fraudulent transactions are found, the credit reporting agency should be contacted immediately to determine how to have the transaction deleted.

For more information on identity theft, concerned individuals should visit the website of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) at <http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/edu/microsites/idtheft/> or call the FTC hotline at 1-877-IDTHEFT. Any suspected identity theft should be reported to the FTC immediately. For affected persons who may have questions for Hortica, they may call 1-800-851-7740 or email Hortica at [securedata@hortica-insurance.com](mailto:securedata@hortica-insurance.com). Information regarding the loss of the locked shipping case will also be posted on Hortica's website at [www.hortica-insurance.com](http://www.hortica-insurance.com).

About Hortica: Founded in 1887, Hortica provides specialized business insurance to garden centers, nurseries, retail florists, wholesale floral distributors, greenhouse growers, landscape contractors and interior plantscapers. Based in Edwardsville, Ill., it is the only U.S. insurance company that dedicates the majority of its resources to the horticultural industry.