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Phoenix-area financing deals on the increase

EXCERPT FROM PHOENIX BUSINESS JOURNAL ARTICLE BY - Angela Gonzales

Financing deals are beginning to pick up — another sign the economy may be taking a turn for the better.

Scottsdale-based **Columbia West Capital LLC** served as financial adviser in a \$63.2 million management buyout for a client in Nevada and a \$7.5 million leveraged recapitalization for Phoenix-based Televerde.



The Televerde deal gives a bigger company stake to James Hooker, Televerde's president and CEO for the past 15 years, as well as other senior members of the management team. Part of the money, which comes from Houston-based Main Street Capital, will be used for growth initiatives.

Televerde contracts with the Arizona Department of Corrections to hire female inmates at Perryville Prison in Goodyear to provide telemarketing services.

Larry Fleischman, director of marketing for Televerde, said Main Street investment in local companies is a positive economic sign.

"Here we are, a Phoenix company that has received this kind of interest and a new ability to help grow our company," he said. "We're going to be using the money to reinvest in initiatives that will enable us to better serve our market, better compete against those in our space and further strengthen our position as a 'category of one' company."

Guy Downing, managing director of **Columbia West Capital**, said debt markets are slowly bouncing back. Columbia has roughly doubled its staff within the past year, to 15 employees.

Acme Lift Co., a wholesale rental company based in Mesa, completed a \$77.2 million recapitalization to enlarge its fleet and accelerate growth, said Chairman and CEO Woody Weld.

He said Acme Lift renegotiated with its lenders to recapitalize the company with a \$50 million senior asset-based credit facility, an \$8.7 million nonamortizing second-lien loan, \$3.5 million in subordinated notes and \$15 million in preferred equity. That will provide an expanded capital base to support growth in an improving market, Weld said.

Ryan Barradas, founder of WealthPoint LLC in Phoenix, said business owners are beginning to feel more confident.

“A lot of them are serial entrepreneurs who are tired of sitting on their hands,” he said. “They’re ready to take things to the next level. Everyone has been so paralyzed the last two or three years.”

His company acquired Phoenix-based Liquidity Partners and merged with Pivotal Financial this month.

Liquidity Partners co-owner Tim Young, who now is a partner in WealthPoint, said his company prepares business owners to maximize the value of the business before handing them off to investment banks such as Columbia.

Acme Lift Co.: www.acmelift.com

Columbia West Capital: www.columbiawestcap.com

Televerde: www.televerde.com

WealthPoint LLC: www.wealthpointllc.net