



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Empire signs a loan distribution agreement with B2B Trust to offer clients maximum leveraged loan choice and flexibility

September 8, 2005 – Empire Financial Group (“Empire”) today announced the signing of a new investment loan distribution agreement with B2B Trust to provide segregated fund loans to Empire clients who want to borrow to invest in their non-registered Empire policies. B2B Trust, a subsidiary of Laurentian Bank of Canada, will provide a comprehensive suite of loan options, including the popular 100% Accelerator Loan, which offers approved clients up to \$100,000 with no money down, no margin call and interest-only payments.

“The agreement with B2B Trust complements rather than replaces Empire’s long-time partnership with TD Investment Lending Services. Our clients and business partners want maximum choice and flexibility in terms of lender, loan and payment options,” says Jim Gibson, Director of Individual Marketing, “With these two premier providers and Empire’s proven performance as a value manager, we’re delivering an effective wealth accumulation strategy.”

Falling savings rates and a growing awareness among Canadian consumers that they may have waited too long to start saving for retirement contributed to significant market growth in leveraged loans in recent years.

“Since the 1980s, savings rates have dropped more than 15%,” says Gibson, “As a result, people are looking for ways to make up for shortfalls in their savings. Wise investors who are comfortable with a higher level of risk can use leveraging to narrow the gap on that shortfall.”

With over twenty years experience in the investment lending business and a loan portfolio in the billions, B2B Trust is well known among financial advisors for its comprehensive suite of investment lending products and service solutions.

“Our clients have come to value B2B Trust’s credit expertise, service and flexibility when it comes to lending programs,” says Al Spadaro, Vice President, Business Development with B2B Trust, “we are pleased to count Empire among our clients for our segregated fund loan offering and look forward to providing Empire clients and business partners with a new level of choice when it comes to lending products.”

“Since leveraging involves more risk, segregated funds, with their powerful maturity and death benefit guarantees are an ideal investment vehicle,” Gibson adds.

About Empire

The mission of The Empire Life Insurance Company (“Empire”) is to provide solutions for the changing financial security and wealth management needs of Canadians. Under the marketing identity of Empire Financial Group, and through a nation wide network of professional financial advisors, managing general agents, brokers and group producers, Empire offers competitive individual and group life and health insurance, investment products and segregated funds. The Company’s success is based on a commitment to being approachable and responsive to the needs of its clients and business partners, on consistently solid investment performance, and on faith in its employees as future leaders of the Company.

About B2B Trust

B2B Trust is committed to providing financial advisors, planners and brokers with superior financial products and services for distribution to their clients. B2B Trust is a leading third-party supplier of investment and RSP lending products, the leading supplier of wholesale deposit products and a long-time provider of self-directed products, banking solutions and mortgages to the financial advisory community across Canada. B2B Trust's products and services are available nationally. The company is a wholly owned subsidiary of Laurentian Bank of Canada. Its head office is located in Toronto, Ontario, and the web site address is www.b2b-trust.com.

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