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### **2009 Off-Course Retail Report Tracks Record Number of Store Closures**

**Omaha, NE** – Longitudes Group today announced the release of its 2009 Market Trend Report on USA Off-Course Golf retail. 2009 marks the largest number of closures in the golf marketplace since Longitudes Group began conducting this research six years ago. Over 245 brick and mortar off-course golf stores closed in the last 12 months in the US, a net drop of over 17% in total doors and a drop of 9.6% in total square footage.

First released in 2004, Longitudes Group annually tracks the growth and contraction of the Off-Course retail market. The report includes a complete analysis of 179 markets tracking last year's metro-by-metro changes both in the number of stores and the expansion/contraction of total retail square feet. Since 2008, seven metro areas including Bangor, ME and Paducah, KY, lost the only golf store in town. Golfers in many areas are now dependent on shopping at the golf course, sporting goods, on-line or even at mass merchants for their golf gear. In the overall off-course retail segment, 2009 has followed previous years with the large format, 'Big Box' stores gaining significant market share as the smaller, independent retailers were forced to close. These 'Big Box' stores continue to grow their influence with manufacturers and golfers alike, now representing 24% of all stores, but 60% of all retail space in the channel.

Key findings of the 2009 research include:

- Total square footage of off-course retail decreased by 9.6%, while the number of total off-course doors decreased by 17%.
- Overall, out of 179 DMAs that have at least one off-course golf retail store, 50% lost doors, 5% gained doors, and 45% remained the same.
- Golf Galaxy, Golfsmith, and PGA Superstores account for 42% of the total market square footage and 174 doors in the USA off-course retail market.
- Los Angeles, CA suffered the largest number of closings with 26 stores shuttering their doors.

Each metro area represented a unique mix of supply and demand variables indicating any number of influences that can impact the success of a location and local/regional market dynamics. Success in Off-Course Golf is not a simple matter of luck. Understanding the significant market differences is crucial to the success of manufacturers, retailers, real estate professionals and many in the business of golf. This one-of-a-kind report uncovers these market differences and will be an invaluable tool in discerning new opportunities for off-course retail expansion.

"In our sixth year of tracking this golf distribution channel, we were disheartened to see the quality and number of independent retail closures," stated Sara Killeen, President of



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Longitudes Group. "Many of the Mom & Pops that could not survive the economic downturn had been in business for 20+ years."

#### The Research

Calls to retailers were conducted via Longitudes Group outbound research and call center, based in Omaha, Nebraska. These phone surveys established a baseline count of stores, store size and product categories carried. Retailers that had gone out of business, moved locations, or were incorrectly categorized as brick and mortar golf retailers were removed from the list or updated. Additional sources were utilized such as on-line yellow page list services, in-market personal interviews with industry participants, and company websites.

The report is affordably priced at \$395 per copy through Longitudes Group website, [www.longitudesgroup.com/reports](http://www.longitudesgroup.com/reports). For further information on the preparation of a custom analysis please contact Sara Killeen at (402) 991-6620.

Longitudes Group, LLC, headquartered in Omaha, Nebraska, is a research and marketing company providing unique analysis on the travel and spending behaviors of avid golfers in the US and Canada. Armed with a database containing information on the behavior of 6.0 million avid golfers mapped by county and zip code, Longitudes Group uses a geo-demographic approach to probe both the location and purchase behavior of the avid golfer population. On the supply side, Longitudes Group has built the most up-to-date database of golf retailers including 16,000 golf facilities, 1,234 off-course retail stores and 1,800 chain sporting goods store. Canadian Market Analyses are also available. For more information, visit the company online at [www.longitudesgroup.com](http://www.longitudesgroup.com).

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