

# NEWS RELEASE

## For Immediate Release

### **The Whiteman Foundation/Empire Southwest Commit \$500,000 to the Mesa-Based Child Crisis Center for Major Shelter Renovation**

**MESA, Ariz.** (Oct. 23, 2008) – The Mesa-based Child Crisis Center, a nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing child abuse and neglect, is getting a much-needed renovation thanks to the Whiteman Foundation, a charitable entity of Mesa-based Empire Southwest, and a team of professionals committed to the cause.

Empire, one of the largest Caterpillar dealers in the U.S., has pledged \$500,000 to the Child Crisis Center for the renovation of its shelter located at 604 W. Ninth St. in Mesa. The updates to the facility, which was built in 1986, will make it easier for the staff at the Child Crisis Center to provide typical childhood experiences for the children living in the shelter. The facility has the capacity to care for up to 42 children ages birth through 11 years at any given time. In 2007, 323 children stayed at the shelter for a combined total of 9,097 nights.

Among the project highlights, Gilbert-based Porter Brothers General Contractors will be removing all of the popcorn ceilings; installing updated lighting fixtures, flooring and furniture; gutting the bathrooms; completing a modern kitchen remodel; and changing the function of some of the rooms.

“Our goal is to provide a more home-like atmosphere for the children who come here and the staff members and volunteers who work so tirelessly to provide a safe, caring environment for the kids,” said Jeffrey Whiteman, third-generation CEO of Empire Southwest. “As a resident of Mesa myself and a significant employer in the city, we remain committed to causes in our community that are making a difference in the lives of children.”

Along with the financial commitment, Empire has worked to assemble a team of professionals who are also donating their services to the project. To date, that includes Vincent Di Bella, principal architect at Mesa-based Saemisch + Di Bella, who has completed architectural and design plans for the renovation. Any other subcontractors or businesses interested in providing pro bono goods or services for this project should contact Terry Hines, chief operating officer of the Child Crisis Center, at (480) 834-9424. The project has been in the planning phase for the past year. Demolition is underway and the project is expected to be completed in early 2009.

“As a nonprofit, we’re grateful to Empire Southwest and the highly skilled professionals who are teaming up on this effort,” said Christine Scarpati, CEO of the Child Crisis Center. “The improvements they are making to our shelter will greatly enhance the experience of the hundreds of children who come here each year.”

The \$500,000 committed by Empire Southwest will come from various charitable entities connected to Empire, including the Whiteman Foundation, established by the family in 1961 and named for Edna Rider Whiteman, mother of Empire Southwest founder Jack Whiteman. Empire is committed to contributing at least 2 percent of its pre-tax earnings to charity each year through its charitable arms. Since its inception, the Whiteman Foundation has donated more than \$5 million to nonprofit organizations, many of which are based in the East Valley. For more information on the Whiteman Foundation, contact Executive Director Mollie Trivers at (480) 633-4413. Grants are by invitation only.

### **About Child Crisis Center**

Founded in 1981 by a small group of volunteers, the Child Crisis Center has extended a helping hand to children and families in need for nearly three decades. Committed to preventing child abuse and neglect, the Center’s shelter and programs have provided aid and comfort to more than 12,000 children over the years. Staff and volunteers work together to create an atmosphere of security, acceptance and encouragement where children have a chance to heal from trauma, build their self esteem and enjoy the experiences of just being a kid. For more information, visit [www.childcrisis.org](http://www.childcrisis.org) or call (480) 969-2308.

### **About Empire Southwest**

Empire Southwest is a family-owned business founded in 1950 as Empire Machinery, an Eastern Oregon Caterpillar and John Deere dealership. When founder Jack Whiteman was awarded Caterpillar’s Arizona territory in 1959, the company relocated and began building partnerships with Arizona’s construction and mining industries. Today, Empire ranks among the top Caterpillar dealers in the world. The company has more than 1,800 employees in a territory that includes Arizona, southeastern California and portions of northern Mexico. For more information, visit [www.empirecat.com](http://www.empirecat.com).

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