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Big Lots Launches National TV Advertising Campaign

*Nation's Largest Broadline Closeout Retailer Builds On
National Branding Effort With \$50 Million Campaign*

April 1, 2003 (COLUMBUS, OH) Starting today, consumers across the country will see the benefits of closeout shopping as Big Lots launches its first national television advertising campaign. The \$50 million campaign will run nationwide, providing a cost-effective way to raise awareness and build the company's brand.

"The national TV campaign will feature commercials highlighting the closeout moment — the excitement and thrill of the Big Lots shopping experience," stated Big Lots Chairman and CEO Michael Potter. "This strategy will enable stores in all of our markets to benefit from television exposure."

The advertising initiative includes a series of four new 30-second television commercials produced by Columbus, Ohio-based SBC Advertising. The ads feature comedian veteran and resident closeout expert, Jerry Van Dyke. Best known as the loveable "Luther" on the television comedy series *Coach*, Van Dyke was selected as the spokesperson for Big Lots five years ago, and during the past few years, has created a successful and entertaining look at the world of closeout shopping.

"Over the years, Van Dyke's humorous approach has helped us portray a frugal and fun look at closeout shopping," said Kent Larsson, executive vice president of marketing for Big Lots. "In the new campaign, Van Dyke is the resident closeout expert who helps bring closeout-shopping fanatics down to earth."

In addition to the four new spots, Big Lots produced one commercial specifically targeting the Hispanic consumer. This commercial will run in Spanish and be aired nationally on Univision, Telemundo, and TeleFutura.

"Our expanded knowledge, appreciation, and understanding of the Hispanic culture and consumer led to our decision to continue with Spanish language commercials — the first of which launched last year," noted Larsson.

Launching the national advertising campaign is the latest in a series of initiatives to broaden the appeal of closeout shopping. Company initiatives for 2003 call for:

- The opening of 90 new stores
- The continued expansion of the furniture business by adding 145 departments into both new and existing stores
- The continuation of the store remodel program by remodeling over 200 stores in eastern U.S. markets, many of which will include expanded furniture departments
- The implementation of certain elements of the company's Ohio LAB (Learning and Building) stores, primarily in new and remodeled stores
- Continued progress on key supply chain initiatives
- Construction of a fifth distribution center in Durant, Oklahoma

A Fortune 500 company with more than 40,000 associates, Big Lots has over the past two years converted all stores (Pic 'N' Save, Mac Frugal's and Odd Lots) into a single national brand and remodeled nearly half of its more than 1,350 stores in 45 states.

To learn more about Big Lots or to speak with a company representative and/or local store manager, contact Keri Lucas at 614.278.7023.

Big Lots, Inc. (www.biglots.com) is the nation's largest broadline closeout retailer with annual revenues exceeding \$3.8 billion. Headquartered in Columbus, Ohio, Big Lots operates more than 1,350 retail stores serving 45 states. Four regional distribution centers throughout the country, ranging in size from 1 million to 3 million square feet, provide the company's stores with brand-name products from more than 3,000 manufacturers. Big Lots offers merchandise at 20 to 40 percent below most discount retailers and up to 70 percent below conventional retailers. Founded in 1967, the company employs more than 40,000 associates across the U.S. By creating excitement with brand name closeouts and bargains through a unique shopping experience, Big Lots meets the needs of customers by providing an assortment of merchandise including consumables, seasonal products, furniture, housewares, toys, and gifts. Big Lots is traded on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol **BLI**.

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