



## **Rent-A-Center, Inc. Expects to Exceed High End of Current Third Quarter Earnings Guidance**

September 26, 2002

PLANO, Texas, Sept. 26 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Rent-A-Center, Inc. (Nasdaq: RCII - News; the "Company"), the largest rent-to-own operator in the country, expects to exceed the high end of its previously announced third quarter 2002 guidance of \$1.10 per diluted share by approximately \$0.02.

"Generally speaking, the third quarter of every year is our seasonally weakest," commented Mark E. Speese, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Company. "However, I am delighted to announce that we will exceed our original expectations as a result of stronger than expected revenues and cost control," added Mr. Speese.

The Company continues to reinvest in the growth of its current business operations as well as in new store development and acquisitions. During the third quarter of 2002, the Company has opened 17 new store locations and acquired 23 stores as well as accounts from an additional 24 locations. During the same period, the Company prepaid approximately \$21 million in senior debt. The Company expects to have approximately \$80 million of cash on hand following an additional payment of \$19 million of senior debt, which is expected to occur in the next few days. "We believe that our ability to achieve our stated growth objectives, both in terms of our core business as well as our new store and acquisition initiatives, while at the same time strengthening our balance sheet by reducing our leverage remains one of our key strengths," commented Mr. Speese. "We continue to believe in the long term growth opportunities in this industry," added Mr. Speese, "and we continue to position ourselves to capitalize on this opportunity while growing earnings by 10% to 15% annually."

Rent-A-Center, headquartered in Plano, Texas currently operates 2,363 company-owned stores nationwide and in Puerto Rico. The stores generally offer high-quality, durable goods such as home electronics, appliances, computers, and furniture and accessories to consumers under flexible rental purchase agreements that generally allow the customer to obtain ownership of the merchandise at the conclusion of an agreed-upon rental period. ColorTyme, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of the Company, is a national franchisor of 329 rent-to-own stores, 317 of which operate under the trade name of "ColorTyme," and the remaining 12 of which operate under the "Rent-A-Center" name.

This press release and the guidance above contain forward-looking statements that involve risks and uncertainties. Such forward-looking statements generally can be identified by the use of forward-looking terminology such as "may," "will," "expect," "intend," "could," "estimate," "should," "anticipate," or "believe," or the negative thereof or variations thereon or similar terminology. Although the Company believes that the expectations reflected in such forward-looking statements will prove to be correct, the Company can give no assurance that such expectations will prove to have been correct. The actual future performance of the Company could differ materially from such statements. Factors that could cause or contribute to such differences include, but are not limited to: the final reconciliation of the Company's books and records for the third quarter of 2002; uncertainties regarding the ability to open new stores; the Company's ability to acquire additional rent-to-own stores on favorable terms; the Company's ability to enhance the performance of these acquired stores; the Company's ability to control store level costs and implement its margin enhancement initiatives; the Company's ability to realize benefits from its margin enhancement initiatives; the results of the Company's litigation; the passage of legislation adversely affecting the rent-to-own industry; interest rates; the Company's ability to collect on its rental purchase agreements; the Company's ability to effectively hedge interest rates on its outstanding debt; changes in the Company's effective tax rate; and the other risks detailed from time to time in the Company's SEC filings, including but not limited to, its annual report on Form 10-K for the year ended December 31, 2001 and its quarterly reports on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended March 31, 2002 and on Form 10-Q for the quarter ended June 30, 2002. You are cautioned not to place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements, which speak only as of the date of this press release. Except as required by law, the Company is not obligated to publicly release any revisions to these forward-looking statements to reflect the events or circumstances after the date of this press release or to reflect the occurrence of unanticipated events.