



News

Primary Contact:

Tyler Bradford
Intermarket Communications
(212) 888-6115 x245
tbradford@intermarket.com

RJ O'Brien & Associates
222 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 900
Chicago, Illinois 60606

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

R.J. O'Brien Announces Acquisition of Zap Futures

Chicago-based Introducing Broker pioneered retail electronic futures trading

Chicago, March 1, 2004 – R.J. O'Brien and Associates, Inc. (RJO), one of the oldest and largest futures commission merchants, today announced it has acquired Zap Futures, a large Chicago-based Introducing Broker and a pioneer in electronic futures trading.

Under the agreement, effective March 1, William Kaiser, founder and President of Zap Futures, and his partner, Rick Gallwas, Chief Operating Officer of Zap Futures, will manage RJO Futures, the retail division of R.J. O'Brien and will be a very integral part in developing products for RJO's Introducing Broker network. The acquisition will more than double RJO's retail client assets under management. Terms of the acquisition are private.

"We are very excited to welcome Bill and Rick and their entire group to the RJO team", said Gerald Corcoran, CEO of R.J. O'Brien. "They bring a wealth of experience both as introducing brokers and as electronic pioneers. We have found a team that shares RJO's values and they will integrate almost seamlessly into our framework."

Zap Futures deals exclusively with retail futures accounts and Foreign Exchange, and was the first futures brokerage firm to offer electronic futures trading, doing so via satellite in 1994. In 1997, it was the first electronic broker to offer retail customers direct linkage to the Chicago Mercantile Exchange's GLOBEX platform for trading of E-Mini futures and options.

"We knew that our experience pioneering Electronics Futures Trading was a good match with R.J. O'Brien", said Kaiser. "We look forward to joining a firm so focused on technology and service. We can't wait to get started."

Zap Futures' two main business areas are Electronics (trading software and applications) and Systems and Managed Money Trading (brokers). The company is ten years old and has 18 employees, all of whom will be offered positions within RJO Futures.

In addition to its retail business, R.J. O'Brien has significant business serving approximately 200 introducing brokers nationwide, as well as Foreign Exchange, Fixed Income and Institutional Trading services. In 2003 RJO traded a record 27.3 million futures and options contracts on Chicago's two principal exchanges, up 14 percent from the previous record in 2003, and accounted for more than 3 percent of the volume on each of the exchanges.

"Serving introducing brokers has been and will remain an extremely important part of RJO's business," said Mary Ellen Scanlin, Chief Executive Officer of R.J. O'Brien's Introducing Broker Division. "Bill and Rick's team will add value to our service offerings to IB's as well as to RJO Futures because of their knowledge and expertise."

About R. J. O'Brien

Founded in 1914, R.J. O'Brien is a privately owned Futures Commission Merchant (FCM), and one of the oldest and best-known independent futures brokerage firms in the industry. RJO is a founding member of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, a full clearing member of the Chicago Board of Trade, New York Mercantile Exchange, Commodity Exchange of New York and the New York Board of Trade. RJO offers the latest in order entry technology coupled with 24-hour execution and clearing on every futures exchange worldwide. RJO services a nationwide network of over 195 introducing brokers and some of the world's largest financial, industrial and agricultural institutions.

In February of 1999, RJO established a Foreign Exchange (FX) desk to facilitate inter-bank currency transactions. Since that time, RJO has developed several products and services that focus specifically on FX and its derivatives.