

# NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **Stage Stores Third Quarter Results Increase 6.2%**

HOUSTON, TX, November 18, 2010 -- Stage Stores, Inc. (NYSE: SSI) today reported that its third quarter results improved 6.2%. The Company had a net loss of \$6.9 million, or \$0.18 per share, for the third quarter ended October 30, 2010 versus a net loss of \$7.3 million, or \$0.19 per share, last year.

For the nine months ended October 30, 2010, net income increased to \$5.7 million from \$0.9 million last year. Diluted earnings per share improved to \$0.15 this year compared to \$0.02 in the prior year period.

The Company also reported that it repurchased approximately 1.7 million common shares in the third quarter for a total of \$20.4 million under its \$25 million Stock Repurchase Program.

Andy Hall, President and Chief Executive Officer, commented, "The third quarter marked the fourth consecutive quarter in which we achieved improved bottom-line results versus the prior year. Our results for the quarter keep us on track to meet our fiscal 2010 objectives of growth in sales, operating margin and EPS."

Mr. Hall continued, "Operationally during the third quarter, we increased the number of Goody's branded stores to 62 with the addition of eleven new and thirteen rebranded stores. We continue to be very pleased with the performance of these stores. In addition, we added two Estee Lauder and two Clinique counters during the period, ending the quarter with 176 and 169 counters, respectively. We remain on track with the roll out of our markdown optimization tool and with the start-up of our eCommerce platform, which will go live with an initial 800 item selection in time for the holiday shopping period."

Mr. Hall concluded, "We are now forecasting an increase in comparable store sales for the fourth quarter of 1.0% to 3.0%. We look forward to providing our customers with exceptional service, selection and value throughout the holiday shopping period."

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Fiscal 2010 – Updated Fourth Quarter and Full Year Guidance

The Company anticipates that comparable store sales for the fourth quarter will be in a range of 1.0% to 3.0%. This compares to its previous guidance for the quarter of flat to a 2.0% increase. The Company noted that the diluted share count estimates for the fourth quarter and full year have been revised to reflect the effect of the shares repurchased during the third quarter.

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2010:

|                    | <u>4Q 2010 OUTLOOK</u> |   |        | <u>4Q 2009</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------|---|--------|----------------|
| Sales (\$mm)       | \$448                  | - | \$457  | \$432          |
| Diluted EPS        | \$0.78                 | - | \$0.81 | \$0.72         |
| Diluted Shares (m) | 37,000                 |   |        | 38,446         |

FY 2010:

|                    | <u>FY 2010 OUTLOOK</u> |   |         | <u>FY 2009</u> |
|--------------------|------------------------|---|---------|----------------|
| Sales (\$mm)       | \$1,465                | - | \$1,473 | \$1,432        |
| Diluted EPS        | \$0.91                 | - | \$0.94  | \$0.75         |
| Diluted Shares (m) | 38,000                 |   |         | 38,413         |

Conference Call Information

The Company will hold a conference call today at 8:30 a.m. Eastern Time to discuss its third quarter results. Interested parties can participate in the Company's conference call by dialing 703-639-1161. Alternatively, interested parties can listen to a live webcast of the conference call by logging on to the Company's web site at [www.stagestoresinc.com](http://www.stagestoresinc.com) and then clicking on Webcasts, then the webcast link. A replay of the conference call will be available online until midnight on Friday, November 26, 2010.

About Stage Stores

Stage Stores, Inc. brings nationally recognized brand name apparel, accessories, cosmetics and footwear for the entire family to small and mid-size towns and communities through 789 stores located in 39 states. The Company operates its stores under the five names of Bealls, Goody's, Palais Royal, Peebles and Stage. For more information about Stage Stores, visit the Company's web site at [www.stagestoresinc.com](http://www.stagestoresinc.com).

Caution Concerning Forward-Looking Statements

This document contains "forward-looking statements". Forward-looking statements reflect our expectations regarding future events and operating performance and often contain words such as "believe", "expect", "may", "will", "should", "could", "anticipate", "plan" or similar words. In this document, forward-looking statements include comments regarding the Company's sales, comparable store sales and EPS outlooks for the fourth quarter of the 2010 fiscal year, as well as for the entire 2010 fiscal year. Forward-looking statements are subject to a number of risks and uncertainties which could cause actual results to differ materially from those anticipated by the forward-looking statements. These risks and uncertainties include, but are not limited to, those described in our Annual Report on Form 10-K as filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC") on March 30, 2010, and other factors as may periodically be described in our other filings with the SEC. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date of this document. We do not undertake to update our forward-looking statements.

(Tables to Follow)

**Stage Stores, Inc.**  
**Condensed Consolidated Statements of Operations**  
(in thousands, except per share data)  
(Unaudited)

|  | Thirteen Weeks Ended |                |                   |                |
|--|----------------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
|  | October 30, 2010     |                | October 31, 2009  |                |
|  | Amount               | % to Sales (1) | Amount            | % to Sales (1) |
| Net sales  | \$ 331,850           | 100.0%         | \$ 324,944        | 100.0%         |
| Cost of sales and related buying, occupancy<br>and distribution expenses | 255,260              | 76.9%          | 251,396           | 77.4%          |
| Gross profit   | 76,590               | 23.1%          | 73,548            | 22.6%          |
| Selling, general and administrative expenses                             | 86,827               | 26.2%          | 83,222            | 25.6%          |
| Store opening costs  | 1,189                | 0.4%           | 1,174             | 0.4%           |
| Interest expense, net of income of \$21 and \$1, respectively            | 937                  | 0.3%           | 1,079             | 0.3%           |
| Loss before income tax   | (12,363)             | -3.7%          | (11,927)          | -3.7%          |
| Income tax benefit   | (5,498)              | -1.7%          | (4,608)           | -1.4%          |
| Net loss   | <u>\$ (6,865)</u>    | <u>-2.1%</u>   | <u>\$ (7,319)</u> | <u>-2.3%</u>   |
| <b>Basic and diluted loss per share data:</b>                            |                      |                |                   |                |
| Basic loss per share   | <u>\$ (0.18)</u>     |                | <u>\$ (0.19)</u>  |                |
| Basic weighted average shares outstanding                                | <u>37,362</u>        |                | <u>38,084</u>     |                |
| Diluted loss per share   | <u>\$ (0.18)</u>     |                | <u>\$ (0.19)</u>  |                |
| Diluted weighted average shares outstanding                              | <u>37,362</u>        |                | <u>38,084</u>     |                |

(1) Percentages may not foot due to rounding.

**Stage Stores, Inc.**  
**Condensed Consolidated Statements of Operations**  
(in thousands, except per share data)  
(Unaudited)

|  | Thirty-Nine Weeks Ended |                |                  |                |
|--|-------------------------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
|  | October 30, 2010        |                | October 31, 2009 |                |
|  | Amount                  | % to Sales (1) | Amount           | % to Sales (1) |
| Net sales  | \$ 1,016,911            | 100.0%         | \$ 1,000,247     | 100.0%         |
| Cost of sales and related buying, occupancy<br>and distribution expenses | 746,276                 | 73.4%          | 742,019          | 74.2%          |
| Gross profit   | 270,635                 | 26.6%          | 258,228          | 25.8%          |
| Selling, general and administrative expenses                             | 257,031                 | 25.3%          | 250,682          | 25.1%          |
| Store opening costs  | 3,024                   | 0.3%           | 2,825            | 0.3%           |
| Interest expense, net of income of \$71 and \$77, respectively           | 2,979                   | 0.3%           | 3,378            | 0.3%           |
| Income before income tax   | 7,601                   | 0.7%           | 1,343            | 0.1%           |
| Income tax expense   | 1,941                   | 0.2%           | 474              | 0.0%           |
| Net income   | <u>\$ 5,660</u>         | <u>0.6%</u>    | <u>\$ 869</u>    | <u>0.1%</u>    |
| <b>Basic and diluted earnings per share data:</b>                        |                         |                |                  |                |
| Basic earnings per share   | <u>\$ 0.15</u>          |                | <u>\$ 0.02</u>   |                |
| Basic weighted average shares outstanding                                | <u>37,998</u>           |                | <u>38,028</u>    |                |
| Diluted earnings per share   | <u>\$ 0.15</u>          |                | <u>\$ 0.02</u>   |                |
| Diluted weighted average shares outstanding                              | <u>38,318</u>           |                | <u>38,403</u>    |                |

(1) Percentages may not foot due to rounding.

**Stage Stores, Inc.**  
**Condensed Consolidated Balance Sheets**  
(in thousands, except par value)

|   | October 30, 2010<br>(Unaudited) | January 30, 2010  |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| <u><b>ASSETS</b></u>  |                                 |                   |
| Cash and cash equivalents   | \$ 45,476                       | \$ 93,714         |
| Merchandise inventories, net  | 420,078                         | 306,360           |
| Prepaid expenses and other current assets   | 29,647                          | 27,095            |
| Total current assets  | 495,201                         | 427,169           |
| Property, equipment and leasehold improvements, net   | 326,056                         | 342,001           |
| Intangible asset  | 14,910                          | 14,910            |
| Other non-current assets, net   | 17,965                          | 16,351            |
| Total assets  | <u>\$ 854,132</u>               | <u>\$ 800,431</u> |
| <u><b>LIABILITIES AND STOCKHOLDERS' EQUITY</b></u>  |                                 |                   |
| Accounts payable  | \$ 184,171                      | \$ 100,602        |
| Current portion of debt obligations   | 13,295                          | 12,726            |
| Accrued expenses and other current liabilities  | 67,523                          | 69,688            |
| Total current liabilities   | 264,989                         | 183,016           |
| Long-term debt obligations  | 28,449                          | 38,492            |
| Other long-term liabilities   | 101,885                         | 102,877           |
| Total liabilities   | 395,323                         | 324,385           |
| Commitments and contingencies   |                                 |                   |
| Common stock, par value \$0.01, 100,000 shares authorized,<br>56,832 and 56,080 shares issued, respectively | 568                             | 561               |
| Additional paid-in capital  | 512,756                         | 501,800           |
| Less treasury stock - at cost, 20,230 and 18,071 shares, respectively                                       | (315,453)                       | (288,079)         |
| Accumulated other comprehensive loss  | (5,698)                         | (5,897)           |
| Retained earnings   | 266,636                         | 267,661           |
| Total stockholders' equity  | 458,809                         | 476,046           |
| Total liabilities and stockholders' equity  | <u>\$ 854,132</u>               | <u>\$ 800,431</u> |

**Stage Stores, Inc.**  
**Condensed Consolidated Statements of Cash Flows**  
(in thousands)  
(Unaudited)

|  | Thirty-Nine Weeks Ended |                  |
|--|-------------------------|------------------|
|  | October 30, 2010        | October 31, 2009 |
| <i>Cash flows from operating activities:</i>   |                         |                  |
| Net income   | \$ 5,660                | \$ 869           |
| Adjustments to reconcile net income to net cash provided by operating activities:    |                         |                  |
| Depreciation, amortization and impairment of long-lived assets                       | 45,953                  | 45,053           |
| Loss on retirements of property, equipment and leasehold improvements                | 307                     | -                |
| Deferred income tax (benefits) expense   | (86)                    | 662              |
| Tax benefits (deficiency) from stock-based compensation                              | 966                     | (391)            |
| Stock-based compensation expense   | 4,842                   | 4,953            |
| Amortization of debt issue costs   | 224                     | 218              |
| Excess tax benefits from stock-based compensation                                    | (1,936)                 | (129)            |
| Deferred compensation obligation   | 65                      | 93               |
| Amortization of employee benefit related costs                                       | 320                     | 390              |
| Construction allowances from landlords   | 5,217                   | 3,543            |
| Changes in operating assets and liabilities:   |                         |                  |
| Increase in merchandise inventories  | (113,718)               | (64,814)         |
| (Increase) decrease in other assets  | (4,495)                 | 2,060            |
| Increase in accounts payable and other liabilities                                   | 72,999                  | 74,431           |
| Total adjustments  | <u>10,658</u>           | <u>66,069</u>    |
| Net cash provided by operating activities  | <u>16,318</u>           | <u>66,938</u>    |
| <i>Cash flows from investing activities:</i>   |                         |                  |
| Additions to property, equipment and leasehold improvements                          | (28,049)                | (36,110)         |
| Proceeds from insurance related to property, equipment<br>and leasehold improvements | <u>-</u>                | <u>578</u>       |
| Net cash used in investing activities  | <u>(28,049)</u>         | <u>(35,532)</u>  |
| <i>Cash flows from financing activities:</i>   |                         |                  |
| Proceeds from revolving credit facility borrowings                                   | -                       | 133,225          |
| Payments of revolving credit facility borrowings                                     | -                       | (133,225)        |
| Proceeds from long-term debt obligations   | -                       | 1,585            |
| Payments of long-term debt obligations   | (9,474)                 | (8,805)          |
| Repurchases of common stock  | (27,374)                | (289)            |
| Proceeds from exercise of stock awards   | 5,090                   | 891              |
| Excess tax benefits from stock-based compensation                                    | 1,936                   | 129              |
| Cash dividends paid  | <u>(6,685)</u>          | <u>(5,712)</u>   |
| Net cash used in financing activities  | <u>(36,507)</u>         | <u>(12,201)</u>  |
| Net (decrease) increase in cash and cash equivalents                                 | (48,238)                | 19,205           |
| <i>Cash and cash equivalents:</i>  |                         |                  |
| Beginning of period  | 93,714                  | 26,278           |
| End of period  | <u>\$ 45,476</u>        | <u>\$ 45,483</u> |