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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Keen Communications Acquires Adventure Publications**

*Strategic merger creates a family of publishing imprints for outdoor and travel enthusiasts*

Keen Communications, based in Birmingham, AL, with an office in Covington, KY, and Adventure Publications, based in Cambridge, MN, are pleased to announce that the companies have merged publishing imprints and interests effective October 8, 2015. The new combined enterprise is known as AdventureKEEN (adventurewithkeen.com). The transaction was brokered by Howard Fisher of The Fisher Company.

Adventure Publications, the largest independent publisher of birding books, is also renowned for full-color field guides for animals, constellations, trees, rocks and minerals, plus many children's books. The company has a rich backlist of 400-plus titles that also includes cookbooks, regional history books, and diverse nature-themed titles. Founded in 1988 by Gordon and Gerri Slabaugh, Adventure Publications joins the other publishing brands of Keen Communications, which include Menasha Ridge Press, Wilderness Press, Clerisy Press, The Unofficial Guides, and Nature Study Guild. Keen's imprints produce some of the best-selling travel and outdoor guides in the country, delivering to readers and enthusiasts the best travel content and outdoor where-to information available.

This strategic acquisition for Keen folds together decades of collective experience bringing guidebooks to market. AdventureKEEN titles will continue to be trusted resources for parks, interpretive centers, and specialty retailers, as well as for the book trade.

The coming-together story is a familiar one for Keen. Cofounders Bob Sehlinger and Richard Hunt collaborated for years at the Denver Publishing Institute and as part of U.S.I.A. book industry delegations before merging their respective companies in 2006, the genesis of Keen. Similarly, Hunt and Adventure Publications' Gordon Slabaugh worked together at Houghton Mifflin in the late 1980s. Both followed their respective yet similar paths in publishing, championing outdoor topics and local subjects that sell best for retailers. The merging of companies is a reunion of sorts and a big step forward for the newly combined group.

"Gordon has always been a standout salesman, and he's remarkably astute about what works best for accounts, from product to service. Gerri has used her talents and insight to develop clear, concise, and intuitive guides for readers of all ages," said Hunt. "The team that Gordon and Gerri have assembled in Cambridge is truly one of the most customer-focused groups I've ever seen."

Hunt also added that the most affirming part of AdventureKEEN is how well the Adventure group complements the Keen staff. "It's not often that within a relatively small team, many folks have 10-, 15-, 20-, and even 25-year tenures. That's a testament to how much we value our staff."

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Molly Merkle, chief operating officer of Keen, and Gerri Slabaugh, publisher of Adventure, are leading the integration of operations between the two enterprises. Gerri will remain in an active consulting role before transitioning into retirement, along with Gordon. Julie Arthur of Adventure will direct the combined AdventureKEEN sales efforts.

Keen is represented to the book trade by Publishers Group West.

The transaction on behalf of Adventure Publications was initiated and brokered by Howard Fisher of The Fisher Company, a specialist in book and media transactions. [www.thefishercompany.com](http://www.thefishercompany.com).

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