

# CARU® NEWS

For Immediate Release

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## CARU DIRECTOR INVITED TO SHOWCASE SELF-REGULATION AT FTC, HHS PANEL

*New York, New York – July 13, 2005* -- Elizabeth Lascoutx, director of the Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU), a division of the Council of Better Business Bureaus (CBBB), will participate in a workshop panel on Marketing, Self-Regulation & Childhood Obesity, hosted by the Federal Trade Commission and Department of Health and Human Services.

Lascoutx, a leading expert on self-regulation and advertising to children, was invited to describe for the July 15 panel the role of self-regulation in ensuring that advertising to young children is truthful, accurate and age-appropriate.

Lascoutx will explain how the self-regulatory system works, how CARU's *Self-Regulatory Guidelines for Children's Advertising* (the *Guidelines*) were developed and how they have evolved, the effectiveness of the system and new developments at CARU.

"I appreciate the invitation and I want to thank the FTC and HHS for the opportunity to share with this audience the work we do – and the work we have done for more than 30 years," said Lascoutx.

CARU's *Guidelines*, which serve as the foundation for all CARU's work, are comprehensive standards for messages targeting children under 12 in all media. The *Guidelines* are flexible and adaptable to a changing landscape and evolving media. For example, CARU and an industry task group developed the Internet guidelines which formed the basis for the federal Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA).

CARU's application of its *Guidelines* to particular advertising claims illuminates best practices for the entire industry. The industry has responded to CARU's requests to modify advertising with a compliance rate of more than 97 percent. To provide guidance and ensure transparency, the results of all CARU cases are released to the press and posted on CARU's Website. Complete case reports are available upon request to the general public.

"Major corporations follow our *Guidelines*, which go far beyond anything that could be required by law. That illustrates the industry's commitment to our robust and effective system," said Lascoutx.

Lascoutx also noted several recent changes at CARU:

- CARU has streamlined its complaint process. CARU's Website – CARU.org – includes an email link allowing parents and others to relay questions or concerns about advertising directed at children. All complaints are sent directly to CARU staff and receive prompt consideration. The Website will soon include an interactive complaint form.

- The National Advertising Review Council (NARC), which sets policies and procedures for CARU, has created a new position to improve outreach to consumers, including parents and educators.
- To broaden its expertise, CARU has added experts in child nutrition to its Academic Advisory Board. The Advisory Board, leading experts in the fields of education, communication, child development, child mental health and nutrition assists in the evaluation of individual ads and in the review and application of the *Guidelines*.
- CARU has established a new task force charged with examining an appropriate approach to “advergaming.” The task force is expected to make its recommendations later this year.

The Board of Directors of the National Advertising Review Council remains committed to strengthening the children’s advertising review process and it is always a part of CARU’s purview to be thinking about how to improve that process.

#### About CARU

The Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) was founded in 1974 to promote responsible children's advertising as part of a strategic alliance with the major advertising trade associations through the National Advertising Review Council (comprising the AAAA, the AAF, the ANA and the CBBB). CARU is the children's arm of the advertising industry's self-regulation program and evaluates child-directed advertising and promotional material in all media to advance truthfulness, accuracy and consistency with its *Self-Regulatory Guidelines for Children's Advertising* and relevant laws.

CARU is financed by the children’s advertising industry and operates independently under the aegis of the CBBB.