

For Immediate Release

## **CARU RECOMMENDS CEC MODIFY CHUCK E. CHEESE WEBSITE, COMPANY AGREES TO DO SO**

*New York, NY – April 23, 2009* – The Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., has recommended that that CEC Entertainment, operator of the Chuck E. Cheese Website [www.chuckecheese.com](http://www.chuckecheese.com), modify the Website to provide a neutral age-screening mechanism and include appropriate corporate contact information. The company has agreed to do so.

CARU, the children’s advertising industry’s self-regulatory forum, monitors Websites for compliance with CARU’s *Self-Regulatory Program for Children’s Advertising*, including guidelines on Online Privacy Protection, as well as with the Children’s Online Privacy Protection Act. COPPA.

The Chuck E. Cheese Website provides visitors with information about Chuck E. Cheese restaurants, as well as games and promotional information for children. The Website’s homepage invites visitors to “Join the Chuck E-Club and receive our best one-time special offer plus exclusive coupons, promotions and birthday specials.”

To join the Chuck E-Club, a registrant must first submit a year of birth and then an email address. Upon its initial review, CARU determined that when potential registrants submitted a year of birth reflecting an age under 13, the following language appeared: “Chuck E. Cheese takes children’s on-line privacy very seriously. Based on the information provided, access has been denied to this area of the site for 24 hours. Please wait 24 hours before trying again.”

CARU also determined that the Website’s privacy policy did not include the operator’s contact information as required by COPPA.

Following its review CARU recommended that the site operator employ a neutral age-screening mechanism, including a tracking device to prevent visitors from circumventing the screening process; modify that the registration process to eliminate language that acted as a tip-off to under-age children and adequately disclose corporate contact information as required by COPPA.

Although the operator asserted that the site was in compliance with CARU’s guidelines and COPPA, it agreed to make the recommended changes “in the spirit of self-regulation.”

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*CARU’s inquiry was conducted under NAD/CARU/NARB Procedures for the Voluntary Self-Regulation of National Advertising. Details of the initial inquiry, CARU’s decision, and the advertiser’s response will be included in the next NAD/CARU Case Report.*

**About Advertising Industry Self-Regulation:** The National Advertising Review Council (NARC) was formed in 1971 by the Association of National Advertisers, Inc. (ANA), the American Association of Advertising Agencies, Inc. (AAAA), the American Advertising Federation, Inc. (AAF), and the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. (CBBB). Its purpose is to foster truth and accuracy in national advertising through voluntary self-regulation. NARC is the body that establishes the policies and procedures for the CBBB’s National Advertising Division (NAD) and Children’s Advertising Review Unit (CARU), as well as for the National Advertising Review Board (NARB) and Electronic Retailing Self-Regulation Program (ERSP).

NAD and CARU are the investigative arms of the advertising industry’s voluntary self-regulation program. Their casework results from competitive challenges from other advertisers, and also from self-monitoring traditional and new media. The National Advertising Review Board (NARB), the appeals body, is a peer group from which ad-hoc panels are selected to adjudicate those cases that are not resolved at the NAD/CARU level. This unique, self-regulatory system is funded entirely by the business community; CARU is financed by the children’s advertising industry, while NAD/NARC/NARB’s sole source of funding is derived from membership fees paid to the CBBB. Funding for ERSP is derived from membership fees paid to the Electronic Retailing Association. For more information about advertising self regulation, please visit [www.narcpartners.org](http://www.narcpartners.org).