Hernando de Soto and Patrick Byrne Unite to Challenge Global Poverty & Inequality

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Blockchain used to Create First Global Record of Who Controls Territory and Property Rights

SALT LAKE CITY Dec. 13, 2017 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- World-renowned economist Hernando de Soto and blockchain technology leader Patrick Byrne (founder Overstock.com, Inc. (NASDAQ:OSTK) and blockchain subsidiary Medici Ventures) have formed a joint venture to develop a global property registry system to surface the property rights of billions of people in the developing world. The new company – De Soto, Inc. – brings together de Soto's decades worth of reforms (especially regarding property rights) at the Institute for Liberty and Democracy (ILD) and Medici Ventures' blockchain expertise to build solutions to empower individuals through recognized property ownership.

De Soto, Inc. is developing a blockchain-based system using mobile applications and social media integration that will bring to light the thousands of "disconnected ledgers" (i.e., informal ownership records) that exist at local levels in communities around the world. In doing so, it will create a global repository on which ownership and transfer can be based. The system aims to promote the interests of people who are currently operating extra-legally, as well as multinational corporations who are trying to cooperate with local owners. The company expects to launch its first pilot program in early 2018.

"I envision a world in which people with rights to their property and business assets pull themselves—and their communities —out of poverty," said de Soto. "About 80 percent of the world's population is unable to enter into the modern global economy due to lack of visible and standardized property records. Billions of people have resources that cannot easily be transformed into productive capital. Blockchain is a powerful tool to solve these structural issues, which are some of the principal causes of poverty and conflict."

Considering merely real estate, the poor in developing countries own a staggering $14 trillion in assets that is "dead capital." In Peru alone, untitled real estate assets amount to $74 billion in value that Peruvians cannot use to establish creditworthiness or leverage as collateral for loans. Lacking formal ownership and the legal protection it affords, citizens of the developing world may turn for protection to terrorist organizations, who gain power by promising enforcement of de facto local property ownership.

Byrne, CEO of Overstock.com and founder of its subsidiary Medici Ventures, has been a longtime advocate for bitcoin and its underlying technology, blockchain. "Working with Hernando de Soto is the honor of my lifetime," said Byrne. "Hernando's work has demonstrated that secure ownership of property is a catalyst that sets into motion the engine of progress, creating enormous wealth in the process. From my first public talks on blockchain I emphasized that blockchain's application to property could lift billions out of poverty. Hernando and I intend to use blockchain technology to empower and enfranchise the five billion people who live outside formal economies within five years."

"One of our main missions is to democratize capital -- to help the poorest members of society participate in global markets," said Jonathan Johnson, president of Medici Ventures. "Hernando's work proves that implementing policies to surface and protect property rights undermines terrorist organizations and promotes the prosperity of those who were previously forced to operate outside the formal economic system. Blockchain can solve this problem. It's great to be partnering with Hernando to bring this vision to reality."

De Soto is founder and president of the Peru-based Institute for Liberty and Democracy, considered by *The Economist* to be one of the two most important think tanks in the world. In the last 30 years, de Soto has been designing and implementing legal reforms to empower the poor in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and former Soviet nations through programs that grant access to formal property rights. De Soto has been written of as "One of the 12 Most Important Economists in the World," He won the prestigious Milton Friedman Prize in 2005, was listed as one of 15 innovators "who will reinvent your future" according to *Forbes* magazine's 85th anniversary edition, and has been described by Bill Clinton as "the world's most important living economist".

Byrne is the founder/CEO of Overstock.com. Wired Magazine has called Byrne, "The Messiah of Bitcoin". Byrne has been named the National Entrepreneur of the Year (Ernst & Young, 2011). Overstock has been voted #9 in Employees Choice "Best Places to Work" (Glassdoor, 2011) and named one of the " 100 Most Trustworthy Companies in America" (Forbes, 2014).

About Medici Ventures:
Launched in 2014, Medici Ventures is a wholly owned subsidiary of Overstock.com, Inc., created to leverage blockchain technology to solve real-world problems with transparent, efficient and secure solutions. Medici Ventures has a growing portfolio of groundbreaking blockchain-focused investments, including t0.com, Peernova, Bitt, SettleMint, Factom, and IdentityMind, Spera and Symbiont. The company's majority-owned financial technology company, t0.com, executed the world's first blockchain-based stock offering in December 2016.

This press release contains certain forward-looking statements within the meaning of Section 27A of the Securities Act of 1933 and Section 21E of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934. Such forward-looking statements include all statements other than statements of historical fact. Additional information regarding factors that could materially affect results and the accuracy of the forward-looking statements contained herein may be found in the Company's Form 10-Q for the quarter ended September 30, 2017, which was filed with the SEC on November 8, 2017, and any subsequent filings with the SEC.

About Overstock.com
Overstock.com, Inc. Common Shares (NASDAQ:OSTK) / Series A Preferred (Medici Ventures' tZERO platform: OSTKP) / Series B Preferred (OTCQX:OSTBP) is an online retailer based in Salt Lake City, Utah that sells a broad range of products at low prices, including furniture, décor, rugs, bedding, and home improvement. In addition to home goods, Overstock.com offers a variety of products including jewelry, electronics, apparel, and more, as well as a marketplace providing customers access to hundreds of thousands of products from third-party sellers. Additional stores include Pet Adoptions and Worldstock.com dedicated to selling artisan-crafted products from around the world. Forbes ranked Overstock in its list of the Top 100 Most Trustworthy Companies in 2014. Overstock regularly posts information about the company and other related matters under Investor Relations on its website, http://www.overstock.com.

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SOURCE: Overstock.com, Inc.

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