

## **Detroit Tigers Named Club Retailer of the Year by Major League Baseball**

**DETROIT (Dec. 7, 2011)** – Major League Baseball has named the Detroit Tigers the 2011 MLB Club Retailer of the Year. Delaware North Companies, a global leader in hospitality management and food service, operates retail and food services at Comerica Park, including the the D Shop, a 6,000-square-foot store that opened in April 2011.

The Tigers award marks the third consecutive for a Delaware North Companies Sportservice retail client. The Milwaukee Brewers won the MLB award in 2008, and the Cincinnati Reds garnered the same award in 2010. No award was given in 2009. The award recipient is chosen based on a combination of hard sales data, vendor and customer feedback, and creative marketing and merchandising.

Overall regular season retail sales for the Detroit Tigers in 2011 increased 26 percent over the 2010 season. The D Shop features an “MLB Authentication Collection” area with wood displays and glass-etched cabinets to enhance the presence and presentation of authenticated memorabilia. Sales for MLB Authentication memorabilia – game-used and autographed items marked by a third-party authenticator with a unique and searchable hologram – have increased 100 percent since 2008.

“Tigers fans are able to express their enthusiasm and passion for their team thanks to the club’s commitment to offering a variety of merchandise and apparel at the ballpark’s new D Shop store,” said Howard Smith, senior vice president of licensing for Major League Baseball. “As a result of this aggressive approach, especially with authenticated game-used memorabilia, the Tigers have put themselves in an ideal situation to capitalize on their on-field success.”

The D Shop features more than 200 unique Detroit Tiger-themed items such as barbeque branders and toasters. The D Shop also has an expanded assortment of women’s and kids’ apparel, including Touch by Alyssa Milano, big and tall (3X – 6X) clothing and more than 300 headwear styles and designs.

“Our store is bright and open,” said Janine Kurpiel, Sportservice’s retail manager at Comerica Park. “We used white floors and white ceilings and had a professional lighting engineer make sure the products are displayed properly. We also ensured that the floor plan would allow 30,000 to 40,000 people to pick out the merchandise that they want, purchase it and get back to their seat without losing any game time.”

Larger-than-life murals of current players are featured on the store’s well-lit exterior, a feature Kurpiel credits with attracting fans on non-game days.