

## **Blind Community Leaders Applaud Staples' Initiative to Enhance Staples.com and Store Point of Sale Equipment**

**April 23, 2009** -- Major advocacy groups for the visually impaired applaud Staples' new initiatives designed to improve service to its customers with visual impairments. Staples will be improving its payment service terminals at the in-store point-of-sale with tactile keypads to protect the privacy and security of shoppers with visual impairments. The company will also make improvements to Staples.com that will benefit customers with visual impairments and other disabilities.

Today's announcement is the result of collaboration between Staples and major blindness organizations including the Bay State Council of the Blind, the American Foundation for the Blind, the American Council of the Blind, and the California Council of the Blind. These organizations praised Staples' initiative and urged other retailers to follow the company's example.

### **Web Site Access**

Today's initiative includes Staples' commitment to design [www.staples.com](http://www.staples.com) in accordance with guidelines issued by the Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) of the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) ([www.w3.org/wai](http://www.w3.org/wai)). The guidelines, which do not affect the content or look and feel of a Web site, ensure that Web sites are accessible to persons with a wide range of disabilities. The guidelines are of particular benefit to blind computer users who use screen reader or magnification technology on their computers and who rely on a keyboard instead of a mouse.

"Web site accessibility is of critical importance to both the blind community and to people with disabilities generally," said Paul Schroeder, Vice President Programs and Policy Group, American Foundation for the Blind. "We applaud Staples' commitment to address the accessibility of its Web site, thereby improving the browsing and shopping experience for a broad range of on-line shoppers."

### **Point of Sale Improvements**

Staples will be adding tactile keypads to payment services devices throughout the chain. The new units will allow Staples' shoppers who have difficulty reading information on a touch screen to privately and independently enter their PIN and other confidential information. Staples

stores in Massachusetts will have the new devices by September of this year. All stores in the country are scheduled to have the devices by the middle of next year.

The new devices are designed to protect the financial privacy of shoppers who are blind or visually impaired. The devices have tactile keys arranged like a standard telephone keypad and work in conjunction with Staples' existing point of sale terminals.

Blind community representatives praised Staples' plan to enhance its payment services devices. "Point of sale devices need to have keys with tactile markings so people who are blind do not have to ask for assistance or share their PIN with strangers," explained Kim Charlson of the Bay State Council of the Blind. "This settlement and the collaboration that led up to it, demonstrates Staples understanding of this fact and its strong commitment to accessibility for blind and visually impaired customers."

### **About Staples**

Staples, the world's largest office products company, is committed to making it easy for customers to buy a wide range of office products, including supplies, technology, furniture, and business services. With 2008 sales of \$23 billion and 91,000 associates worldwide, Staples serves businesses of all sizes and consumers in 27 countries throughout North and South America, Europe, Asia and Australia. In July 2008, Staples acquired Corporate Express, one of the world's leading suppliers of office products to businesses and institutions. Staples invented the office superstore concept in 1986 and is headquartered outside Boston. More information about Staples (Nasdaq: SPLS) is available at [www.staples.com](http://www.staples.com).

### **About American Council of the Blind (ACB), Bay State Council of the Blind (BSCB) and California Council of the Blind (CCB)**

American Council of the Blind is a national consumer-based advocacy organization working on behalf of blind and visually impaired Americans throughout the country, with members organized through seventy state and special interest affiliates. The Bay State Council of the Blind and the California Council of the Blind are the Massachusetts and California state affiliates of the ACB. ACB, BSCB and CCB are dedicated to improving the quality of life, equality of opportunity and independence of all people who have visual impairments. Their members and affiliated organizations have a

long history of commitment to the advancement of policies and programs which will enhance independence for people who are blind and visually impaired. More information about ACB, BSCB and CCB can be found by visiting [www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org), <http://www.acb.org/baystate/>, and [www.ccbnet.org](http://www.ccbnet.org).

### **About American Foundation for the Blind**

The American Foundation for the Blind (AFB) is a national nonprofit that expands possibilities for people with vision loss. AFB's priorities include broadening access to technology; elevating the quality of information and tools for the professionals who serve people with vision loss; and promoting independent and healthy living for people with vision loss by providing them and their families with relevant and timely resources. AFB is also proud to house the Helen Keller Archives and honor the over forty years that Helen Keller worked tirelessly with AFB. For more information visit us online at [www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org).

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