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Branded Prepaid Cards: A Smart Addition to Your Student's School Supplies List

*Students head back to school with a safe, convenient, easy-to-use card
to manage their money*

August 30, 2007 (Sherborn, MA) Millions of students are heading back to school this fall, and many will be on their own for the first time at college. The Network Branded Prepaid Card Association (NBPCA), a non-profit, inter-industry trade association created to advance the success of network branded prepaid cards, suggests adding branded prepaid cards (cards with an American Express, Discover, MasterCard or Visa logo) to your student's back-to-school shopping list. The cards are safe and convenient, and empower students to manage their money—while offering parents peace of mind.

Branded prepaid cards can be used at almost any retailer to pay for any type of purchase. And some can be used to pay recurring bills (including cell phones, gym memberships and magazine/movie subscriptions) and to get cash from ATMs (great in an emergency or for planned cash spending).

The brand mark on prepaid cards provides added security not available with checks and cash. If the card is lost, stolen or used for purchases without authorization, it may be reissued and the funds replaced. To help students stick to their budget, they can track spending online and over the phone. Some cards even offer balances through text messages. And, loading funds to the card in advance helps students stay in control, reducing the risk of overspending, overdraft fees and running up debt.

Two types of branded prepaid cards can help students manage their money:

Reloadable prepaid cards: Reloadable prepaid cards are a safe, convenient alternative to using cash and checks for everyday purchases and paying recurring bills. They can be purchased online and at some bank branches and retailers such as supermarkets and drug stores. Parents (or students 18 and older) load funds when the card is purchased and then

have the option to add more money in a variety of convenient ways. Some cards even enable parents to set up automatic transfers, while others enable employers to credit the student's wages from a part-time or campus job to the card.

"These cards are a great tool for parents," said John Barbella, Senior Vice President, BankFirst. "Reloadable prepaid cards, given to high-school or college students to use for living expenses or allowances, provide the assurance that the funds are protected and mom and dad control the release of funds."

Branded gift cards: Branded gift cards—also available online and at many bank branches and retail stores—can be used to pay for purchases at millions of retailers. Although most cannot be reloaded or used at ATMs, they are great for students who need to purchase a host of necessities including books, school clothes, food and gas. Some branded gift cards are co-branded with sports team logos or school insignias, giving them a personalized touch and making them fun to use.

"Branded gift cards are at the top of student's wish lists because these cards give them the opportunity to purchase exactly what they need at a time that is most convenient for them," said Talbott Roche, Senior Vice President, Blackhawk Network. "And, they make gift giving easier for the gift giver as they can be purchased at convenient locations such as grocery stores in any denomination."

About the NBPCA

The Network Branded Prepaid Card Association (NBPCA) is a nonprofit, inter-industry trade association that supports the growth and success of network branded prepaid cards and represents the common interests of the many players in this new and rapidly growing payments category. The NBPCA's Working Groups drive the activities of the Association for its more than 35 members. For additional information, visit www.NBPCA.com.