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Retail Alliance Wins Prestigious 2009 Leveraging Excellence Award from NCCI

*College Store Coalition Recognized for Shared Store Management System
that Enables Deployment of Best Practices*

Plymouth Meeting, PA, January 13, 2009--The Retail Alliance, a coalition of independent college stores that shares and deploys best practices via its wholly owned software company, RATEX Business Solutions, has won the 2009 Leveraging Excellence Award from the National Consortium for Continuous Improvement in Higher Education (NCCI). The award will be presented February 8 at NCCI's preconference at the American Council of Education Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.

"While many award programs focus on innovation and improvement, the NCCI award recognizes active leveraging for greater impact of projects that are on the frontier of expanding excellence in higher education," said University of Kentucky President Lee T. Todd, Jr., chair of the judging panel. "NCCI award winners have cultivated improvements beyond the initial implementation of an innovative practice."

The Retail Alliance was recognized by NCCI for its development of the RATEX college store operating system. The Retail Alliance purchased RATEX in December 2000 and began a systematic, member-driven reengineering of the product that included transitioning RATEX to the Windows® platform. The current version of the product, VisualRATEX™, is one of the industry's best business systems and the only one owned by universities. Many of the nation's largest independent college stores are Retail Alliance members and VisualRATEX users.

"This recognition is a special honor and a tribute to our member stores and the RATEX Business Solutions team, who have worked together for many years to make VisualRATEX the standard of excellence in college store operating systems," stated Richard W. McDaniel, President and Chairman of the Retail Alliance. "Even more important, the award underscores the commitment of Retail Alliance member stores to developing the best business practices in the industry, in order to deliver the highest value to the universities they serve."

In recognizing the Retail Alliance's achievement, NCCI judges noted that "the project is truly a collaborative reengineering of processes, with significant and measurable impact areas of need such as textbook and course material costs. It addresses an area of increasing expense for universities with an innovative way to reduce costs."

In addition to Chair Lee Todd, the NCCI panel of judges included:

- Ellen Babby, Vice President, Advancement, Membership, and Planning, American Council on Education;
- Ronald A. Crutcher, President, Wheaton College (Massachusetts);
- Susan Jurow, Senior Vice President, Professional Development and Communications, National Association of College and University Business Officers;
- Mohammad H. Qayoumi, President, California State University, East Bay.

About NCCI

NCCI represents a wide range of member institutions, with many individuals working in organizational development, quality assessment, planning, and institutional improvement. Its programs promote sharing best practices and supporting professional development of individual members. See NCCI's web site for more information on the Leveraging Excellence Award and the winning projects: www.ncci-cu.org.

About the Retail Alliance

The Retail Alliance is an organization of independent college stores that have joined together to share best practices, maximize their collective buying power, and strive for collegiate retailing excellence. Founded by the college stores of Cornell University, Brigham Young University, the University of Colorado Boulder, the University of Connecticut, and the University of California San Diego, the Retail Alliance now has more than 50 member stores whose collective annual revenues are nearly \$1 billion. The Retail Alliance will mark its tenth anniversary in 2009.

The Retail Alliance owns RATEX Business Solutions, whose flagship product, VisualRATEX™, is the industry's most comprehensive retail management system. The Retail Alliance has partnerships with a number of leading industry suppliers, including Follett Higher Education Group, NACSCORP, and Ingram Book Company.

The members of the Retail Alliance Board of Directors are:

- Richard McDaniel, Retail Alliance President and Chairman, Cornell University;
- Pamela Mills, Vice-Chairman, CU Book Store, University of Colorado Boulder;
- William Simpson, Secretary/Treasurer, UConn Co-op, University of Connecticut;
- John Turk, Director, UCSD Bookstore, University of California San Diego;
- Roger Reynolds, Director, BYU Bookstore, Brigham Young University;
- Thomas Romantic, Director, Cornell Business Services, Cornell University;
- Jere Warner, Director, RATEX Business Solutions;
- Marc Fleischaker, Director, Arent Fox LLP.

For more information, visit the Retail Alliance website: www.retailalliance.org.

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