

WH Smith PLC to open 33 stores with Welcome Break

WH Smith PLC announces an agreement with Welcome Break to open travel stores in all 33 of Welcome Break's motorway service areas.

Today's announcement follows the successful trial of a WHSmith Travel store at the Welcome Break service area on the M1 at Newport Pagnell.

The existing stores at the 33 Welcome Break locations will be refitted and re-branded as WHSmith during 2007 and will be operated on a franchise basis. The new units will enhance WHSmith Travel's existing network, which comprises 259 units in key air, rail and motorway locations.

Commenting on the announcement, Kate Swann, WHSmith Group Chief Executive, said:

"We are delighted to be working with Welcome Break to extend our motorway service area offer, bringing WHSmith products and services direct to the motorist."

Rod McKie, Welcome Break's CEO, said:

"The last two years have seen significant growth in customer revenues at Welcome Break and this has been due, in no small part, to our introduction of proven high street brands into our motorway service areas. Today's deal with WHSmith represents an exciting further step in this strategy and the partnership will allow us to offer our customers the best in the travel retail sector."

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Enquiries:

WH Smith PLC

Sarah Heath
Mark Boyle

Media Relations
Investor Relations

020 7851 8850
020 7851 8820

Brunswick

Tom Buchanan
Pamela Small

020 7404 5959

FD (PR Adviser to Welcome Break)

Ben Foster

020 7831 3113

NOTE TO EDITORS

WH Smith PLC is made up of 543 high street stores and a further 259 retail units in airports, rail stations and motorway service areas. The High Street business sells a wide range of newspapers, magazines, stationery, books and entertainment products, while WHSmith Travel sells a tailored range of newspapers, magazines, books and confectionery products for people on the move. In addition, WHSmith Direct – www.whsmith.co.uk - serves customers on the internet 24 hours a day.

Welcome Break is the second largest motorway service area operator in the UK, with a portfolio of invested sites and associated lodges. The company offers motorists services, goods and amenities including fuel, restaurants, retail shopping, rest areas, leisure facilities and overnight accommodation 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. The company was acquired by global investment firm, Investcorp, in 1997. Since then the business has benefited from a substantial capital investment programme exceeding £170 million.