

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Utopia™ Self-Service Checkout Solution launched in Chicago's Strack & Van Til supermarket chain.

First major installation of new state-of-the art, versatile and flexible Microsoft based solution.

Bowling Green, KY – 5/16/08 The first major installation of Pan-Oston's **Utopia™** self-service checkout solution is underway in the 30-outlet Chicago area full service grocery and fresh food chain Strack and Van Til. **Utopia™**, developed exclusively by Pan-Oston, is the only self-service checkout solution that is simple to install, manage and update, is scalable, integrates with any POS software, is PCI compliant, and can be up and running in days instead of the months required for other self-service checkout systems. **Utopia™** is also the only Microsoft or Linux based solution in the self-service checkout category.

Strack & Van Till selected the **Utopia™** solution not only because the simple and innovative technology provides a better customer experience, complete flexibility and internal control with any POS software or hardware, but also because the **Utopia™** solution requires less floor space and less capital investment. "It's as if they designed it just for us," said Henry Bykerk, VP, Information Systems of Strack & Van Til. "The installation of our **Utopia™** solution was as simple as Pan-Oston promised. Within three hours of delivery we were ready for customer transactions."

The **Utopia™** self-service checkout solution was developed to give all supermarkets, irrespective of size, the opportunity to offer their customers the enhanced shopping experience and the increased operating margins provided by self-checkout technology. "We had to make it work perfectly for anybody's system, regardless of size, and it had to be scalable and at least as affordable as the competition," said Jim Vance, President of Pan-Oston.

Utopia™ has redefined self-service checkout technology with a slew of firsts like soft programming, delayed mediation, VPN access, biometric security, and ergonomic system and lane design. **Utopia™** is also the first self-checkout system to go live with the new MEI Cashflow® Banknote Recycler (BNR) which combines the functions of a traditional bill acceptor and dispenser into one device, significantly reducing the cash float required for undisrupted self-checkout operation. More information on **Utopia™** is available at www.utopiasco.com.

Pan-Oston, a majority owned subsidiary of Houchens Industries, the largest employee owned ("ESOP") company in the United States, has been designing and manufacturing retail checkout products as well as a broad range of retail fixtures and fittings for over 35 years. www.panoston.com

Strack & Van Til, a subsidiary of Chicago-based grocery distributor Central Grocers Cooperative is a regional chain of full service grocery and fresh food stores with 30 retail locations in and around the Chicago and Northern Indiana area.

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