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### **North Carolina Awards New Contract to Independents *Power Channel Shut Out of Office Supplies Award***

ALEXANDRIA, VA (December 22, 2008) – The National Office Products Alliance (NOPA) is proud to announce that four independent dealers in North Carolina have been awarded state government contracts for office supplies worth approximately \$14 million annually. These awards represent a huge victory for independent dealers, who have won a dual battle against monopolistic sole-source contracting in their state and also defeated all of the national Big Box office product companies that competed against them for the contract.

The winning bidders - Forms and Supply of Charlotte, MyOfficeProducts of Charlotte, Carolina Imaging of Greensboro and Piedmont Office Suppliers, Inc. of Greensboro – were announced on December 18<sup>th</sup> and validated the NC Department of Purchase & Contract's renewed commitment to fairness in the government's procurement practices. These independents and several others around the State worked together for more than three years to level the playing field for small business so that this breakthrough in recapturing state business could be achieved.

News of these awards comes at a critical time, when several states around the country – including California, Georgia and Texas among others – are questioning the benefits and discovering the hidden costs of sole contracting, while also rediscovering the economic multiplier benefits of awarding contracts to much smaller, state-based independent dealers.

During the past year, numerous state and local government audits and media investigations of sole-source office supplies contracts have identified pricing irregularities and unauthorized product sales and substitutions associated with sole-source contracts. NOPA and its members have been pushing for fair and open competition at the federal, state and local government levels and encouraging officials to abandon so-called "strategic" sole-source contracting as their primary purchasing strategy.

"This is a great day for independents," said Mark Leazer, director of sales technology of Forms and Supply, one of the awarded contractors. "It has taken a lot of effort by several determined and principled North Carolina dealers, but the abuses and inherent shortcomings associated with sole-source contracting using large national companies are finally being recognized."

Joe Garrigan, president of Garrigan's Office Plus (Springfield, OH) and NOPA's chairman, noted that "this award to four respected independent dealers will encourage small dealers around the country to redouble their efforts to compete for government contracts. Delivery of consistent "best value" to customers in government as well as commercial markets depends on the

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existence of ongoing competition. It cannot be achieved through ‘winner-take-all, jump-ball style’ competitions that unfairly reward large suppliers and exclude small business.”

**About NOPA**

The National Office Products Alliance (NOPA) is the trade Association for independent office products dealers and their trading partners. Founded in 1904, the Association provides government advocacy, research, information, and networking services to office products dealers. More information on NOPA resources is available online at [www.nopanet.org](http://www.nopanet.org) or by calling (800) 542-6672.

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