

# Chase Expands Blink's East Coast Presence

The bank is sending blink cards to 3 million Eastern U.S. cardholders, stating they'll soon have 3,000 places to use them.

By Mary Catherine O'Connor

Nov. 2, 2005—Banking services provider Chase, which this summer began sending RFID-enabled blink cards to Visa and MasterCard cardholders in select states (see Chase Offers Contactless Cards in a Blink), announced last week that it has expanded its blink rollout, bringing the total distribution of blink cards to 5 million.

More than 2 million cardholders in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut have received, or soon will receive, their cards, as have 900,000 in the Philadelphia area. Chase began sending the other 2 million cards to customers in Georgia in May, and in Colorado in June. The banking company is also incorporating blink into many of its affiliated credit card lines, including those offered through Continental Airlines, Sony, United Airlines and Universal Studios.

Chase and Wawa, a convenience store chain with 540 stores in Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia, have partnered to launch the Wawa Rewards Visa card with blink. This will allow Wawa customers to earn reward points they can redeem for gas, groceries and other items.

"Our research shows us that our customers are very busy and value convenience," says Bob Riesenbach, Wawa's manager of new initiatives, explaining why that chain decided to begin accepting RFID-enabled payments. "Plus, our customers have been asking us for years for a Wawa credit card, and the release of the blink card came at the same time that we were planning on reevaluating whether we should offer a Wawa card."

Wawa will launch the new blink-enabled Wawa Rewards Visa card on Nov. 21. However, 470 of the retailer's 540 locations began accepting blink, MasterCard PayPass and American Express ExpressPay RFID payment cards last week, both inside the stores and at gas pumps. These stores are in New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware. The balance of the Wawa locations, all in Virginia and Maryland, will be ready to accept RFID cards within four months.

Duane Reade, a pharmacy and convenience store chain with 250 locations in New York and its immediate suburbs, has enabled 75 percent of its stores to accept RFID payment cards, with the balance of its stores set to accept the cards by mid-November. The chain will accept blink cards, as well as any cards that bear the MasterCard PayPass or American Express ExpressPay logos. American Express is embedding the ExpressPay tag in all Blue cards it issues, including Blue Cash, Blue for Students, Blue for Business credit cards and Blue Cash for Business.

Other Eastern locations accepting blink cards, issued both under MasterCard and Visa accounts, include 7-Eleven, AMC Theatres, CVS pharmacies, Regal Entertainment movie theaters and Sony Style stores. In

total, some 3,000 merchant locations throughout Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania and Virginia are accepting, or soon will accept, the blink cards. In addition to being accepted at thousands of theaters and stores, blink cards can be used to pay for items at a number of vending machines and kiosks in New York City and Atlanta (see [Vending Machines Accept RFID Cards](#)).

These stores, theaters, vending machines and kiosks also accept RFID-enabled cards bearing the MasterCard PayPass logo, such as those issued by [Citibank](#), [Key Bank](#) or [HSBC](#). In addition, CVS and 7-Eleven stores accept American Express ExpressPay RFID cards.

To promote card usage, a Palo Alto, Calif., technology firm named [WaveTrust](#) recently announced plans to deploy a coalition loyalty program. The program aims to encourage consumers to pay for goods with RFID cards in order to earn WavePoints from participating card issuers and retailers. WaveTrust intends to license its WaveCard brand to card issuers and retailers. According to [the WaveTrust Web site](#), WavePoints could be redeemed for rewards such as gift cards, movie tickets, CDs and consumer electronics.

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