

WGBH/Boston Collaborates with The Hall At Patriot Place Presented By Raytheon to Enhance Museum Access for All Patrons

Boston, January 26, 2009 – The Hall at Patriot Place presented by Raytheon is the crown jewel of the recently opened New England Patriots sports and education complex in Foxborough, Massachusetts. Now, its array of interactive multimedia exhibits and artifacts will be fully accessible to people with disabilities. A collaboration of The Hall's designers, public broadcaster and access pioneer WGBH/Boston and technology partner Softeq Development enables the museum to welcome everyone to enjoy this one-of-a-kind experience.

The Hall faced a unique challenge in making their highly interactive exhibits accessible to visitors who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or have low vision, having created an innovative, immersive environment that makes The Hall so enthralling. This challenge has been met by a range of solutions that are both practical and seamless, and promote a fully inclusive experience, and the first of its kind in New England.

WGBH worked in conjunction with nationally recognized accessibility consultant Kevin McGuire and Softeq Development Corporation, manufacturer of state-of-the-art DURATEQ ATV handheld devices used to deliver access features at Disney World and other venues. WGBH's Media Access Group created captions of the audio of the exhibits and descriptive narration, both services presented to the visitor via Softeq's DURATEQ ATV handheld device. The combination of innovative hardware and software ensures that all of The Hall's visitors fully enjoy every facet of the museum.

Captioning is available for the 15-minute signature film that explores the connection between the Patriots and their fans; footage from the Super Bowl wins; and exhibits such as the Snow Plow Game and the Snow Globe Game, where visitors can step inside a snowy globe and relive the final game at Foxboro Stadium, a playoff win against Oakland in 2001.

Descriptive narration is available for all of The Hall's images and films, and audio navigation of the menus ("talking menus) on the handheld device is provided. Wayfinding around the museum is enabled by environmental description, also created by WGBH.

A sample of the description a visitor who is blind can hear:

In the center of the room, six life-sized mannequins dressed in Patriots uniforms stand in a huddle. A sign reads "Tom Brady was miked up for a 2007 game. Step inside the huddle and listen closely to the conversation that takes place among the players." With his teammates around him, the Brady mannequin checks a list of plays on his left wrist.

Larry Goldberg, director of Media Access at WGBH says, "It is clear through this effort by the Patriots organization that the team's owners take very seriously their desire to make the museum as welcoming as possible to everyone. We congratulate them on yet

another win."

WGBH is a pioneer in creating access to media for all, beginning with its development of television captioning in the '70s. WGBH's Media Access Group brings a wealth of experience to this work with The Hall at Patriot Place. Its collaboration with museums and cultural venues over the years includes Whitney Museum of American Art, Disney theme parks, Boston's Museum of Science and Children's Museum, the Baseball Hall of Fame, Atlanta's World of Coca-Cola and national park visitor's centers across the country.

About the Media Access Group and WGBH

The Media Access Group at WGBH incorporates The Caption Center, the world's first captioning agency, founded in 1972; Descriptive Video Service® (DVS®), which has made television, film and video more accessible to blind and visually impaired audiences since 1990; and the Carl and Ruth Shapiro Family National Center for Accessible Media (NCAM), a research and development entity that builds on the success of WGBH's access service departments to make existing and emerging technologies more accessible to these under-served audiences. Members of the Media Access Group's collective staff represent the leading resources and experts in their fields. For more information, visit access.wgbh.org <<http://access.wgbh.org/>> .

WGBH Boston is America's preeminent public broadcasting producer, the source of fully one-third of PBS's prime-time lineup, along with some of public television's best-known lifestyle shows and children's programs and many public radio favorites. For more information, visit the WGBH Web site <<http://www.wgbh.org/>> .

Softeq Development Corporation

Headquartered in Houston, TX, Softeq Development Corporation specializes in system integration, project management, and product development for Fortune 500 companies.

Softeq has been providing assistive technology solutions for over 5 years.

For more information, visit www.softeq.com <http://www.softeq.com> .

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