



## Sterling Investment Partners Completes Refinancing of Washington Inventory Service

November 16, 2004

Westport, Connecticut -- Sterling Investment Partners, L.P. ("Sterling"), a Westport, CT based private equity firm, today announced that one of its portfolio companies, Washington Inventory Service ("WIS" or the "Company"), completed a \$70 million refinancing led by General Electric Capital Corporation. All of the existing lenders to the Company, including Antares Capital Corporation, CIBC World Markets Corp., National City Equity Partners, Inc. and Babson Capital Management, LLC (a member of the MassMutual Financial Group) were involved in the refinancing of the Company. The proceeds from the new facility were used to refinance a portion of its senior and subordinated debt and to make a dividend distribution to the existing equity investors.

Headquartered in San Diego, California since its inception in 1953, WIS provides inventory counting and information gathering services on a worldwide basis to meet the financial reporting and inventory control requirements of a wide variety of high volume retailers, drug stores, home centers, sporting goods stores, specialty retailers and grocery stores. WIS also provides merchandising support, special project execution, and verification services to confirm compliance with promotional programs to major companies. Major customers include Wal-Mart, Target, Dollar General, Albertsons, Rite Aid, Jo-Ann stores, Walgreen, Sears, Gap, Sunoco, Safeway and Reynolds American. WIS operates 150 offices throughout the United States, Mexico, South America, Europe and Japan and has access to over 11,000 full and part-time employees.

I. Edward Tonkon II, Chief Executive Officer of WIS, noted, "We continue to see strong demand in our end markets and a continued trend towards outsourcing in the industry. This refinancing allows us to take advantage of the considerable amount of debt we have paid down over the last four years to distribute income to our shareholders, and will give the Company an appropriate capital structure going forward as we continue to grow our company both domestically and abroad and meet the complex needs of our customer base."

Charles W. Santoro, a Managing Partner of Sterling Investment Partners, commented, "This recapitalization will enable the company to continue to build its business while providing investors with a substantial dividend. WIS has been a very strong performing company that has provided excellent investor returns for Sterling. We look forward to working with management to continue to grow the company."

Sterling Investment Partners, L.P., based in Westport, CT, is a leading private equity firm focused on the middle market. Sterling invests in companies with significant competitive strengths and growth potential. Founded in 1991, Sterling and its predecessor have completed investments, strategic or add-on acquisitions, and liquidity events with an aggregate transaction value of approximately \$3.5 billion, representing over 45 companies. Sterling maintains a broad industry focus including professional and business services, manufacturing, transportation and logistics, and technology related businesses.