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New credit card to benefit Israel

BY JACOB SUGERMAN

Don't leave home without the first credit card to donate a percentage of each purchase made in support of Israel, which will be released on Sunday.

Heritage Affinity Services, in partnership with U.S. Bank, will launch the HAS Advantage rewards Visa Platinum card on Nov. 20. With each swipe, a portion of the money spent will be donated to an Israel-related charitable organization of choice, and the cardholder will earn one reward point for every dollar spent.

Founded by Menachem Landau and Zev Dobuler, both Americans who made aliyah to Israel in their teens, the HAS Advantage credit card was created in the hopes of getting American proponents more involved in the day-to-day Israeli economy.

"The supporters of Israel in the United States go about their daily spending, and all of it is benefiting the American economy," said Landau. "We wanted to provide them with a vehicle that would allow them to have a connection on a daily basis with Israel."

Card members can select up to five Israel-related charities within the HAS network to support organizations that impact almost every aspect of Israeli society. Additionally, with the rewards program,



People who use the HAS Advantage Rewards Visa Platinum card for their purchases will be donating money to Israel.

HAS Advantage cardholders can redeem their points for various options, including travel domestically and to Israel, brand-name merchandise, electronics, Judaica, and gift certificates.

"Credit cards are becoming the preferred retail payment solution for the vast majority of the American public," said Landau, citing that the usage of cards has increased 20 to 30 percent since last year. "Since they are so heavily

used, it was the natural choice to provide them with the opportunity to use their points to visit and support Israel."

Though the card will only be available in the United States starting next week, the HAS Advantage system will eventually be expanded to markets abroad, primarily to Israel, the United Kingdom and Canada. "We want to establish the company and have a significant sub-

scriber base before we move our idea overseas," added Landau. A debit card, similar to the Advantage credit but with minor changes, will be launched in the second quarter of 2006.

"The support for Israel in the American population is unwavering, since the credit card industry is slowly making checks and cash obsolete," said Landau. "We're confident that this program will be embraced."