

---

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

April 28, 2010

---

**NEW YORK STATE PROVIDING CCTVs  
TO SENIOR CITIZEN CENTERS ACROSS STATE**

Hundreds of vision-enhancing desktop magnifiers are being provided to senior facilities in New York State, thanks to a new program from the Commission for the Blind and Visually Handicapped (CBVH), part of the state Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS).

“This project expands opportunities for legally blind or visually impaired individuals in senior housing or senior centers to access printed materials, enhancing their quality of life and ability to remain independent,” said OCFS Commissioner Gladys Carrión, Esq. “A limited number are still available, and we urge senior centers across the state to apply.”

The project was made possible with federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds. Through a competitive bid process, Vis-Ability Inc. of New City was awarded the contract to supply the SmartView Synergy electronic magnifiers. These desktop magnifiers are also referred to as closed-circuit television systems or CCTVs.

“Without these devices, the most vulnerable members of our communities are even more at risk,” said Mike Parker from Vis-Ability, the company installing the vision-enabling equipment. “Magnifiers mean independence to our sight-challenged parents and grandparents. Otherwise, they have to rely on others – sometimes even strangers – for help reading sensitive things like credit card and investment statements. This is about much more than improving quality of life: for seniors who can no longer read prescription drug labels, the consequences could be fatal.”

Senior citizen centers or senior housing facilities interested in obtaining a system must submit an application to CBVH for approval. The systems are provided at no charge to qualified centers. Applications may be obtained from CBVH by contacting Debra Lomma at (518) 474-8078, or by contacting Mike Parker at Vis-Ability, (800) 598-0635.

The SmartView Synergy viewing device offers up to 69-times magnification displayed on a 22-inch flat screen. The equipment allows people with low vision to read and reply to mail, pay bills, verify credit card statements, see photos of loved ones, read periodicals and books, order from catalogs and print ads, use cookbooks, enjoy crossword and Sudoku puzzles and other activities.

To date, about 200 desktop magnifiers have been placed at senior citizen centers and senior housing facilities throughout the state.