

ISE Introduces Direct Access Connectivity To Options Market Virtual Private Network Lowers Costs, Increases Access

NEW YORK, March 24, 2003 –The International Securities Exchange (ISE) has introduced a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connectivity solution that allows broker/dealers to use ISE trader workstations to route orders to ISE's market over the Internet.

The VPN connectivity addresses strong demand from securities firms to establish low-cost direct access connections to ISE's options market. ISE's VPN-CLICK enables ISE Electronic Access Members (EAMs) to directly access ISE's market over the Internet. The direct access VPN connection has security and encryption features that provides a level of security comparable to a private network or a dedicated line.

Direct access connectivity addresses a growing segment of the securities industry. Many broker/dealers are using direct access trading platforms to better control trading expenses. ISE's VPN-CLICK is intended to reduce a firm's expenses because VPN connectivity is less expensive to operate than the cost of maintaining a private network over dedicated telecommunications lines.

ISE's VPN-CLICK creates a faster time-to-market for broker/dealers looking to establish a quick connection to ISE. The VPN software is simple to install and use, allowing firms to establish connections to ISE in a short period of time.

Firms that decide to use ISE's VPN will send orders to ISE using the CLICK Trade[®] "Lite" version of ISE's CLICK Trade[®] workstation.

"ISE's VPN connectivity will allow brokerage firms from all corners of the country, and the world, to take advantage of ISE's quality markets. At a time when everyone is monitoring their bottom line, ISE remains committed to making trading at the ISE cost-effective for all members and firms," said Gary Katz, ISE's Chief Operating Officer.

ISE Background

ISE, which pioneered electronic options trading in the US, is the largest US equity options exchange.

ISE is the only fully-electronic US options exchange, the first registered securities exchange approved by the Securities and Exchange Commission since 1973, and the first and only electronic options exchange in the global marketplace that has successfully integrated the intrinsic efficiencies of electronic trading with auction market principles.

ISE lists 543 options classes, whose aggregate volume represents more than 90% of the industry's total equity options volume. For more information about ISE, its products and its technology, visit www.iseoptions.com.

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