



SVIA and ASI to Address Safety Issues at CPSC Regional ATV Safety Hearing in West Virginia

State Legislation, Rider Training, Following Recommended Age/Size and Usage Guidelines, and Parental Supervision are Key To Improving ATV Safety

Morgantown, WV, June 5, 2003 -- Today, at a regional Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) hearing at West Virginia University, representatives from the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA) and the ATV Safety Institute (ASI) will join a diverse group of riders, consumer groups, and safety advocates to provide recommendations on ways to improve ATV safety. Speaking on behalf of the industry will be Elisabeth Piper, director, corporate affairs, SVIA; Tom Yager, vice-president, SVIA; and Roger Hagie, chairman, SVIA Board of Trustees.

The ATV industry supports state legislation as the most effective and enforceable means to protect children from riding adult-sized ATVs, enforce parental supervision, prohibit passengers, require protective gear, and prohibit highway use.

“The industry is proud of its unprecedented and far-reaching efforts to promote the safe and responsible use of ATVs and to keep youth under 16 from using adult-sized ATVs,” said Piper. “We all share the same goal – to reduce ATV accidents caused by improper use. When properly used, ATVs are safe products.”

The industry’s efforts include free hands-on training to purchasers of new ATVs and is available to all ATV riders for a nominal fee; a vast public safety awareness campaigns (TV, print, and radio); distribution of safety materials to school and youth organizations; and prominent safety messages on product labels, hangtags, in safety videos, and in safety alerts distributed to purchasers.

According to the recent CPSC ATV exposure survey, the increase in ATV-related injuries reported for 1997-2001 is due in large part to a 40% increase in the numbers of ATVs in use during that same timeframe, as well as riders logging more hours and more miles.

Unfortunately, product misuse is also a major factor. Of children younger than 16 injured on ATVs, 87% rode adult-sized machines. Of all injured riders, only 4 percent received formal training. Only 25% of all first-time ATV purchasers in the United States take advantage of the free training offered by ASI.

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According to CPSC accident records, in the past six years in West Virginia, 88% of ATV accidents involved riders using warned against behaviors. These warned against behaviors include: riding under the influence of drugs or alcohol; children riding adult-sized ATVs; children riding unsupervised; riding without proper training; not wearing protective gear; riding beyond skill levels; riding with any passengers; and riding on public roads.

The risk of fatality associated with ATV use (2.4 fatalities per 100,000 participants) is comparable to the risk of fatality associated with bicycling (2.4) and swimming (2.2).

The ATV industry is convinced that rider education and state legislation are the keys to improving ATV safety for children and adults. Parental supervision is critical. Parents must purchase the right size ATV for their child's age; enroll their child in an ATV rider training course; provide a helmet and other protective gear; make sure they only ride solo and stay off public roads, and always supervise their children under 16 whenever they ride.

Today, tens of millions of Americans ride all-terrain vehicles, 70 percent of them as a family recreation activity. Sales of ATVs have increased five-fold since 1993 to more than 800,000 units in 2002. In addition to recreation, ATVs are used for farming and construction, by law enforcement officials, the military, lifeguard beach patrols, and search and rescue efforts. ATVs were employed in the cleanup efforts at the World Trade Center and the search for the Columbia Space Shuttle debris in Texas.

Over 510,000 riders have taken the ASI RiderCourse since 1988, including more than 47,000 in 2002. Fifteen hundred active ASI Instructors conduct training at 935 locations nationwide. Information on training locations is available toll-free through the ATV Safety Institute at 800-887-2887.

SVIA

The Specialty Vehicle Institute of America® (SVIA) is an information source about the all-terrain vehicle (ATV) industry. SVIA provides information on ATV standards as well as promoting model state legislation on ATV riding. It also serves as a liaison with state and federal agencies on ATV training and their influence upon the environment. Membership is open to all corporations regularly engaged in the business of manufacturing, importing or wholesale distribution of ATVs in the United States. SVIA was formed in 1983 as a national not-for-profit trade association and is based in Irvine, California. Its members include AlphaSports, Arctic Cat, Bombardier, Honda, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha.

ASI

The All-Terrain Vehicle Safety Institute® (ASI), a not-for-profit division of the Specialty Vehicle Institute of AmericaSM (SVIA), was formed in 1988 to implement an expanded national program of all-terrain vehicle (ATV) safety education and awareness. ASI's primary goal is to promote the safe and responsible use of ATVs, thereby reducing accidents and injuries that may result from improper ATV operation by the rider.