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SVIA and ASI to Testify on All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety at CPSC Regional Public Field Hearing in Anchorage, AK

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

Irvine, Calif., July 3, 2003 – Representatives from the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA) and the ATV Safety Institute (ASI) plan to testify at a U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) field hearing on all-terrain vehicle (ATV) safety in Anchorage, Alaska on July 8, 2003. This is the second CPSC regional hearing. The first hearing was held in Morgantown, West Virginia on June 5.

At the June 5 hearing in West Virginia, SVIA and ASI representatives joined a diverse group of riders, consumer groups, and safety advocates to provide recommendations on ways to improve ATV safety.

According to SVIA President Tim Buche, “In West Virginia, we heard from many users who appreciate the value of today’s ATVs. And we were very pleased to hear a broad consensus on certain dominating themes that centered on the fact that ATVs are safe products that are being used by a small segment of the population in an unsafe manner. Almost all the witnesses focused on changing rider behavior through rider training, recommended age/size and usage guidelines, state legislation, and the importance of parental supervision for improving ATV rider safety and awareness as keys to improving ATV safety.”

From 1997 to 2002, sales of new ATVs in the United States more than doubled, from close to 360,000 in 1997 to more than 769,000 in 2002. In Alaska, sales of new ATVs totaled just over 6,000 in 2002.

According to a recent nationwide ATV exposure survey conducted in association with the CPSC, the increase in ATV-related injuries reported for 1997-2001 is due in large part to the 40% increase in the numbers of ATVs in use during that same timeframe, as well as riders logging more hours and more miles. And in a recent independent study of Alaska ATV accident reports involving fatalities, 94% involved riders exhibiting warned against behaviors. In 60% of the cases, the fatally injured rider was not wearing a helmet.

Today, tens of millions of Americans ride all-terrain vehicles, 70 percent of them as a family recreation activity. In Alaska, ATVs are an essential mode of transportation in roadless villages. 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.

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“The vast majority of ATV accidents are preventable,” said Buche. “The ATV industry is convinced that rider education, parental supervision and appropriate state legislation are the keys to improving ATV safety for children and adults. 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.”

The industry’s educational efforts include free hands-on training to purchasers of new ATVs, which is also available to all ATV riders for a nominal fee; a public safety awareness campaign (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.

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.

To arrange an interview with SVIA or ASI spokespersons, please call 949/727-3727, ext. 3091.

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 America (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.