

### No Stopping Today's Seniors

(NAPSA)—Americans may be getting older but, true to our can-do spirit, today's seniors are not slowing down in their golden years. Active and mobile, they have a completely different outlook on life and are defying popular perceptions of "old age" by enjoying a more independent lifestyle than was previously thought possible.

Motorized scooters and power wheelchairs are a major reason this age group is confidently rolling into retirement. More than 200,000 of these vehicles are sold each year in the U.S., helping seniors perform a wide variety of tasks, from getting them to their grandchildren's soccer games to helping them navigate the aisles of the supermarket. Overall, some 1.7 million Americans now get around using power wheelchairs or motorized scooters.

"In recent years, the stigma once associated with the use of wheelchairs and motorized scooters has really waned," said Colleen Fitzsimmons, a physical therapist at the Southern New England Rehab Center in Providence, R.I. "More people want to live to the fullest of their potential and these vehicles enable them to do just that."

Technology is playing a significant role in mobilizing seniors. Today's motorized scooters and power wheelchairs are sleek, high-tech and lightweight—with major improvements in design, function and aesthetics. They have made purchasing these products more of a "want" than a "need" for many consumers.

For example, the Invacare Panther MX-4 Scooter has independent four-wheel suspension, raised fend-



ers and comes in such colors as candy red, ivory and metallic green. The newest power wheelchairs are equally enhanced. Invacare's Pronto M71 has patented SureStep™ technology that enables it to drive over two-inch thresholds and ride smoothly over rough terrain.

"The new generation of power chairs is better looking and can navigate over obstacles very easily so that a consumer can use the product virtually anywhere," said Susan Elder of Invacare Corporation, the world's leading manufacturer and distributor of motorized wheelchairs, power scooters and other home medical equipment.

Within the next ten years, the "baby boom" generation will begin to turn 65, and by 2030, according to the U.S. Census, one in five people will be 65 or older. The overall size of the senior population is projected to double over the next 30 years, growing to 70 million by 2030. Fortunately, with research and development taking off, tomorrow's mobility vehicles are sure to be even more multifunctional and attractive, allowing the good times to keep on rolling.