



Holiday Hints

Off-Highway For The Holidays

(NAPSA)—As the holidays approach, the stress levels often rise. Gifts must be bought, elaborate meals must be prepared, travel arrangements must be... well, arranged. And what to do with the kids out of school? One way to lower the stress level and take advantage of the extra family fun time is to go off-road riding.

Riding dirt bikes and all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) off-road is a pastime that's been gaining popularity. According to the Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC), both motorcycle and ATV sales have been rising steadily for the past 10 years.

The MIC states that U.S. ATV sales in 1991 totaled 150,000 units. By 2002, that number had increased to 845,000 annual units. The MIC also says that in 2002, more than 937,000 new motorcycles were sold in the United States. Of these, approximately 30 percent were off-highway vehicles (a.k.a. dirt bikes).

To meet this increasing off-road demand, motorcycle manufacturers provide all sizes of dirt bikes and ATVs. For example, Suzuki caters to youngsters learning to ride. The Suzuki JR50 dirt bike is aimed at children 7 years old and older, whereas the Suzuki LT-A50 ATV is designed for kids as young as 6. Both are user-friendly with easily controlled power and diminutive sizing to please the parents, yet come with big-bike graphics to appeal to young riders.

Also catering to the entry-level off-road market are a number of programs designed to educate beginning riders on safe and environmentally responsible riding



Going off-road can be an enjoyable way for families to spend time together.

habits. Two such programs are the Motorcycle Safety Foundation's (MSF) *DirtBike School* and the ATV Safety Institute's *ATV RiderCourse*. Both offer training and education to new riders of all ages and skill levels.

"Courses like the *DirtBike School* and the *ATV RiderCourse* emphasize safety and environmental awareness, and they're available in every state," said the MSF's Rob Gladden.

Of course, entry-level riders aren't the only ones who have fun in the dirt. For those who are more experienced, there are plenty of dirt bike and ATV models to choose from—mid-size bikes such as Suzuki's RM250 motocross bike and the full-size Z400 sport ATV are sure to please more skilled riders.

No matter what the model of off-roader—or whether it's two wheels or four—dirt bikes and ATVs are sure to provide hours of family fun and bonding. For more information, check out www.suzukicycles.com or www.dirtbikeschool.com.