

MAKING LIFE MORE FUN

Summer Fun On Four Wheels

(NAPSA)—Each year when warm weather replaces the cold and gloom of winter, people turn their attention to the great outdoors. For years, all-terrain vehicle (ATV) excursions have grown in popularity for families interested in group adventures.

Many reasons have led to this growth. Urban sprawl and video games, among other things, have limited the amount of time kids are spending in nature. Parents look around for activities that include fresh air and exercise. And new entry-level ATVs have opened up off-road activities to people who might have been reluctant in the past.

Most off-road enthusiasts can tell you their favorite vehicle as fast as their favorite reality TV show, but newcomers might have a hard time distinguishing between the latest options. Consider your age, size and experience, and pay attention to the terrain on which you plan to ride. Are you riding on wooded trails or desert sand dunes? Will you need four-wheel drive or can you consider a sportier machine?

Take the Raptor 250, for example, a new entry-level machine



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from Yamaha that can handle a variety of riding areas from basic ATV trails to more advanced motocross tracks. Built as a “sport” ATV, a two-wheel drive version with a more stylish design and sporty performance than its utility brethren, this quad can accommodate a newcomer (over 16 years old) while also allowing more experienced riders to fully showcase their skills.

Vehicles such as the Raptor 250 offer families an activity that most any member can enjoy at his or her own pace, although parents should always follow age and safety recommendations.

“With a lot of new riders in the mix, it’s a great time to consider an ATV Safety course,” said Cathy Tharp, from the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA). “Entry-level ATVs like the Raptor 250 can be great but deserve the proper respect and training to operate correctly.”

Once you’ve settled on your vehicle, find the right riding area for your family. You’d be surprised to find that an ATV riding area, whether a national forest or private ATV park, is probably no more than a couple hours from where you live.

If you’re not sure where to look, start by checking out the National Forest Web sites or visit your local ATV dealer. A quick online search can come up with new riding areas, and there are many ATV-specific sites and forums that offer a lot of information on where to ride in your area.

Just remember, before you get started, be sure to take a training class and learn about the basics of ATV riding techniques and proper riding gear. There are ATV safety courses taught across the country each month, and you can find out more at www.atvsafety.org or by calling (800) 887-2887.