



For Immediate Release

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American Pyrotechnics Association Says Fourth of July Looks Promising for Fireworks Sales Due to National Trend in Relaxing Fireworks Laws

Bethesda, MD, June 21, 2011 –As the Independence Day holiday approaches, consumers are visiting the thousands of fireworks retail establishments across the nation to stock up for their backyard celebrations during the long Fourth of July holiday weekend. This year, Americans in certain states will have a greater variety of fireworks, as well as more places to purchase them due to a national trend in relaxing the consumer fireworks laws.

According to the American Pyrotechnics Association (APA), backyard fireworks have never been more popular or more in demand. Since 2000, there has been on-going proliferation of state and local legislation to relax consumer fireworks laws and lift fireworks prohibitions.¹ These legislative changes were made based in part upon the significant improvement in product quality and compliance with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission's regulations and the significant decline in consumer fireworks injuries, coupled with the sluggish economy during the past several years and the need for local and state governments to creatively find ways to increase revenues.

More states than ever before, 46 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico allow the sale and use of some types of consumer fireworks. Rhode Island and Arizona were the most recent states to lift their stringent fireworks prohibitions to allow the sale and use of consumer fireworks, specifically hand-held and ground based sparkling devices such as sparklers, cone and cylindrical fountains and ground based cake or multiple tube fountains.

And 2011 has created additional opportunities for the fireworks industry to expand their consumer fireworks sales in the states of Kentucky, Utah and New Hampshire where these states modified their fireworks laws to allow a broader variety of consumer fireworks to be sold than in

¹ Legislative activity since 2000: Connecticut became a hand-held and ground based sparkling device state in 2000; Maryland followed Connecticut in 2001; next came Minnesota, again allowing hand-held and ground based sparking devices in 2002; Vermont opted to allow sparklers & novelty devices in 2003; Pennsylvania relaxed its law to allow most fireworks (except firecrackers, aeriels, roman candles and sky rockets in 2004); Georgia joined the hand-held and ground based sparking device states in 2005; Arizona and Rhode Island joined the hand-held and ground based sparking device states in 2010. And in 2011 Kentucky modified its law to allow 'full line' consumer fireworks; followed by Utah relaxing its law to allow multiple tube cakes and repeaters; and New Hampshire now permits reloadable devices.

previous years. Additionally, a number of municipalities across the country, where fireworks had been prohibited, have recently opted to allow consumer fireworks sales to help their cash-strapped budgets, hoping to reap big tax revenues from the sale of fireworks.

Julie L. Heckman, Executive Director of the APA, said that despite the ongoing economic woes that some American families are experiencing, backyard fireworks provide wholesome entertainment and family fun at a good value. Coupled with the fact that gasoline, airfare and higher travel costs have created an incentive for families to ‘*staycation*’ for the extended long holiday weekend, the outlook for fireworks sales should be promising for the fireworks industry this Fourth of July.”

According to Heckman, “When used properly, under close adult supervision, today’s fireworks are more creative, colorful and safer than their predecessors.” And, when it comes to safety, Heckman noted that the safety record associated with backyard fireworks has never been better. Since 1976, when the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) promulgated the current federal standards for consumer fireworks, the fireworks-related injury rate has fallen by more than 90% from 38.3 injuries per 100,000 pounds of fireworks in 1976, to 3.3 injuries per 100,000 pounds in 2008. “I can’t think of one other consumer product on the market today that has achieved such record-breaking growth, yet experienced such a sharp decline in injuries,” added Heckman.

About the American Pyrotechnics Association

The APA is the leading trade association of the fireworks industry. The APA supports and promotes safety standards for all aspects of fireworks. The APA has a diverse membership including regulated and licensed manufacturers, importers, distributors, wholesalers, retailers and professional public display companies. Additional information about the fireworks industry, facts & figures, history of fireworks, state laws, and safety tips can be found on APA’s website at www.americanpyro.com

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