



For Immediate Release

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Association Urges Anti-fireworks Campaigners to Join the Industry and Federal Government to Help Make July 4th Holiday Safest Ever

Bethesda, Maryland, June 22, 2006—The leading trade association of the fireworks industry today urged anti-fireworks groups to end their “misleading” campaigns to ban consumer fireworks and instead join the industry and federal government in promoting safety.

Every year a couple weeks prior to the celebration of Independence Day, anti-fireworks groups including the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) wage a campaign against consumer fireworks use, alleging that fireworks are too risky for amateurs. Such campaigns mislead the public into thinking that consumer fireworks are unsafe, according to the American Pyrotechnics Association (APA). These campaigns also ignore the fact that more states than ever before allow the sale and use of these backyard fireworks and that each year the use of consumer fireworks becomes more popular.

According to Heckman, growth in backyard fireworks use is unprecedented. Since 2000 the use of backyard fireworks has more than doubled. In 2000, Americans used 102 million pounds of backyard fireworks. By 2004, backyard fireworks usage climbed to 212 million pounds. And in 2005, the industry experienced the largest increase ever reported in a single year — over 43 million pounds — bringing the backyard fireworks consumption total to 255 million pounds!

Consumer fireworks, such as cones, fountains and sparklers, are available for sale and use by private citizens in 45 states plus the District of Columbia. Only Delaware, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Rhode Island prohibit these backyard fireworks. “Today’s consumer fireworks are strictly regulated, quite safe when used properly, and the injury rate has declined by more than 75% since 1990,” said Julie L. Heckman, APA’s executive director.

Heckman says that the APA would like to see the NFPA and others that frown upon consumer fireworks use, to tone down the anti-fireworks campaign and turn up the safety message. Heckman notes that the NFPA is a powerful voice when it comes to public safety education. They have done a commendable job educating the public on fire safety and burn prevention with their other programs like *Sparky the Fire Dog* and *Risk Watch*. The APA believes that if the NFPA joined forces along with the Consumer Product Safety Commission, National Council on Fireworks Safety, and fire departments across the country in promoting safety tips for responsible consumer fireworks use, that message would have a significant impact in helping to further reduce the misuse of fireworks.

“It’s time for the NFPA to give up their 1910 campaign calling for a prohibition on consumer fireworks. Forty-five states allow consumer fireworks to be sold and used by the public. By promoting responsible fireworks use, we can make 2006 the safest year yet for the millions of Americans that choose to use legal consumer fireworks,” says 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, distributors, wholesalers, retailers, importers and suppliers of fireworks, and professional display firms. Additional information about the fireworks industry, facts & figures, and state laws, can be found on APA’s web site at www.americanpyro.com