



For Immediate Release

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FIREWORKS UNFAIRLY TARGETED, SAYS TRADE GROUP

Bethesda, Md., June 29, 2005 – State and federal regulators have unfairly targeted America’s fireworks operators since 9/11, imposing numerous uncoordinated and often overlapping regulations and inspections that add nothing to public safety but have added huge cost burdens, according to the American Pyrotechnics Association (www.americanpyro.com), the industry’s principal trade association.

The association represents more than 240 licensed manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers and professional fireworks display companies.

“Safety and security have always been top priorities for this industry,” said APA executive director Julie L. Heckman. “We have always worked closely with federal and state agencies and have an excellent safety and security record.”

Heckman noted that the industry has been closely regulated for years by federal and state agencies, including the Department of Transportation, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives and the federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration.

In addition, fireworks are regulated at the state level in terms of licensing, storage, operator certification and sale and use of consumer fireworks.

In addition to a rigorous training program required for all fireworks display operators, who must be American citizens, new regulations require operators to go through up to four background checks and obtain a clearance letter from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives before they can take part in a single display.

All drivers transporting display fireworks must participate in an alcohol and random drug testing program.

“The bottom line is that it is much harder to qualify to work on a fireworks display – even one display a year – than it is to become a firefighter, a police officer or an ATF agent,” said Heckman.

Inspections also have become arbitrary, she said. In Michigan, a licensed display facility had to stop packing fireworks displays and hold trucks already packed and prepared for distribution for three days to accommodate 25 ATF agents flown in from different parts of the country who demanded to inspect every item. No reason was given and nothing was found.

“We understand that authorities are nervous, and we are sympathetic,” said Heckman. “But there is a lack of coordination between the federal government and the states and a crazy quilt of new regulatory activity and inspections that seems to make very little sense, particularly for an industry that was already one of the most heavily regulated.”

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 fireworks display firms. Additional information about the fireworks industry, facts and figures, and state laws, can be found on APA’s web site at www.americanpyro.com