



Suite 600, 1901 North Moore Street
Arlington, VA 22209 USA
Phone: (703) 522-0086 • Fax: (703) 522-0548
Website: www.hpba.org
Email: hpbamail@hpba.org

Contact:

Deidra Darsa
Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association
301.351.7638 (cell)
darsa@hpba.org
HPBExpo Press Room (ATL): 404.222.6304

Contact: Mary Ellen Menton
Strat@comm
540.229.4505
mmenton@stratacomm.net

Hearth Products Help Consumers Save Money, Clean the Air **Hearth Industry Expo Showcases Trends, New Products**

Atlanta, GA (February 28, 2008) – As U.S. consumers look for ways to save money on their heating bills, hearth manufacturers continue to meet their needs by providing innovative and attractive products. Manufacturers are showcasing their latest products at the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association's (HPBA) HPBExpo, February 28-March 1.

Heating expenditures continue to rise, up nine percent nationally from 2006*, and efficiency continues to be one of the greatest trends. Home experts estimate that stoves and inserts can reduce annual heating costs by 20 to 40 percent when used as a supplement to central furnace systems that cycle on and off several times an hour to heat an entire house – even unoccupied rooms.

“Consumers have more choices than ever to provide their homes with warmth and ambiance, including a variety of renewable fuel options like wood, pellets and corn, all featured at HPBExpo,” said Jack Goldman, HPBA president.

Technology and Product Trends

Eco-friendly, efficient and ease-of-use products are the key attributes of many of this year's hottest products featured at HPBExpo.

Alternative Fuels Aren't So Alternative: The latest in biomass, corn and pellet-fueled stoves, boilers and furnaces are the rage in heating homes in many areas, given today's focus on conservation and green heating.

Options, Options, Options: Manufacturers are developing products that can be adapted easily to burn a variety of fuel sources. This gives consumers the option of changing fuel sources without changing appliances to best serve their needs and their pocket book.

Efficiency First: Fans, circulators and blowers that enhance efficiency, combined with zone-heating home practices, make today's stoves and fireplaces more popular than ever. These innovative technologies provide more options to meet consumers' needs than ever before.

Exploring New Shapes: In addition to the well-known square box of the traditional fireplace, 2008 fireplace designs are inspired by European contemporary styling including a sleek, linear look, plus a round tube.

Becoming One with Nature Outdoors: From easy to tote cast-iron stoves to stucco or river rock gas-fired fire pits, a portable outdoor heat source makes being outdoors more comfortable and cozy, even on the chilliest of nights.

No Chimney? No worries: Add ambiance and artistic effect to rooms that may not even have a chimney. Alcohol-fueled fireplaces, gel logs and similarly fueled products come in a variety of designs and sizes.

Multi-Function Magic: Manufacturers are finding ways to incorporate a second appliance, such as televisions, into the design of today's hearth products and accessories, giving the consumer one unit with two key appliances.

Industry Statistics

Their popularity heightened, indoor fireplaces are the 2nd most requested feature in new homes (National Association of Home Builders 2007 Survey). In 2007, nearly 2.4 million hearth products were shipped across the U.S. While gas burning products continue to represent the largest percentage of products shipped, due to their versatility, electric hearth products continue to gain market edge.

“Despite the slowdown in new home sales across the country, the industry continues to introduce new and unique products found in every room – indoors and out - in custom and remodeled homes nationwide,” Goldman said. “From traditional designs to new, modern looks and materials, our industry is responding to changing customer tastes.”

Industry statistics can be found at www.hpba.org/statistics.

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* (Energy Information Administration 2/28/2008 Fuel Expenditures)

To help consumers approximate the cost-saving benefits of the various options available, HPBA has developed an online guide (www.hpba.org/hearthconsumerguide) and fuel efficiency calculator (www.hpba.org/fuelcalculator) highlighting the differences between appliance options, fuels, approximate efficiency and estimated costs for purchase and operation.