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AMERICANS DECLARE INDEPENDENCE FROM KITCHENS ON FOURTH OF JULY Consumers Get Equipped for the Most Popular Outdoor Cooking Occasion of the Year

ARLINGTON, VA (June 16, 2008) – A Fourth of July celebration is only complete when savory aromas are coming from the grill or smoker. According to the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA), Independence Day is the number one outdoor cooking occasion of the year with 69 percent of American grill and smoker owners firing up the grill for delicious food. With grill and smoker shipments at an industry high, over 17.4 million shipped in 2007, the barbecue industry is meeting the needs of consumers and enhancing the grilling and outdoor living experience by offering products that work with anyone's pocketbook.

“Because grills and smokers are more versatile than ever before, with dozens of features, choosing between a gas, charcoal, electric or pellet is just one question consumers need to consider before shopping,” said Leslie Wheeler, HPBA Communications Director. “To find the right grill or smoker, buyers should first determine their cooking style and needs.”

To ensure a successful celebration this Fourth of July, consumers should evaluate their grills and smokers to make sure they're in good condition prior to the holiday. And, if they fail to meet the manufacturers' safety guidelines, it may be time to purchase a replacement. When shopping for a new grill or smoker, HPBA recommends that prospective buyers consider these questions:

- **What's my budget?** Whatever budget, there is a grill or smoker for everyone. Basic backyard appliances can sell for as little as \$50 to top-of-the-line gourmet grills and smokers for \$5,000 or more.
- **Where will I use my grill or smoker?** Whether it's for a camping trip, backyard patio or a custom-designed outdoor kitchen, it is important to know where the grill or smoker will be placed. Some grills and smokers are specially designed for specific areas.
- **What's my style?** Decide if a gas, charcoal, electric or pellet grill or smoker best suits your cooking style and need. There is a wide world of outdoor cooking options available.
 - **Gas** – The easy convenient choice, gas grills can be ready for grilling in 10 minutes. Gas grills also make it easy to regulate the heat and to cook at several different temperatures at the same time.

- **Charcoal** – Some people claim charcoal cooking produces better flavor. Charcoal can create a high temperature for searing, but can also be used for “low and slow” cooking.
 - **Electric** – Electric grills are ideal for apartment or condo dwellers. To use this type of grill, position it within reach of a nearby outlet, since an extension cord will greatly reduce grill performance. These models are easy to turn on, just like a kitchen stove.
 - **Pellet** – Wood pellets come in a variety of flavors such as hickory, mesquite and oak. They provide the energy source and infuse food with flavors from the resultant smoke. Increasingly popular, pellet grills and smokers are attractive because they are energy efficient and clean burning.
 - **Smoker** – Smokers are gaining in popularity. Water smokers are a good choice for beginners because they're affordable and easy to use. Charcoal is the favorite, but electric and gas are very convenient because they maintain a consistent temperature.
- **What size do I need?** Grills and smokers are measured in square inches of cooking surface. Knowing how many people the food will be prepared for (one family or more) will help in deciding how large the grill or smoker should be.
 - **What features do I want?** Knowing whether the grill or smoker will be used for cooking adventurously or just the basic hot dogs and hamburgers, will help determine the features needed for the new grill or smoker. Today, grills and smokers come with all sorts of interesting “bells and whistles.” Be sure to make your list of “must-have” features.

With a New Grill or Smoker Comes New Accessories

A good accessory can make cooking much easier, allowing for more time to spend with guests. Here are a few must-have accessories consumers should think about putting on their shopping check-list:

- Grill cleaning brush
- Long-handled tongs
- Long-handled fork or knife
- Long-handled brush
- Long-handled spatula

The Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association offers more information – with detailed sections on safety for gas, charcoal/wood chunk and electric grilling, as well as Food Safety Tips for Barbecuing – on the HPBA web site. Please visit www.hpba.org and click on Safety First under Consumer Information.

About Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA)

The 2,800-member Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA), based in Arlington, VA, is the North American industry association for manufacturers, retailers, distributors, representatives, service firms and allied associates for all types of hearth, barbecue and patio appliances, fuels and accessories. The association provides professional member services and industry support in education, statistics, government relations, marketing, advertising, and consumer education.

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