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## **Hearth Industry Expo Showcases Trends, New Products**

*New Data Released Shows Market for Fireplaces, Stoves, Inserts and Other Hearth Products Remains Strong*

**RENO, Nev., March 15, 2007** – Modern materials and designs, alternative fuels, and other innovative new products featured at the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Expo (HPBExpo), March 15-17, highlight the evolving hearth industry that has expanded beyond the fireplaces, wood-burning stoves and fire pokers of generations past.

Today's hearth products are not just for traditional living room settings, according to Jack Goldman, president of the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA). They also are designed for the kitchen, bedroom, bathroom and outdoors. Efficiency, ambiance and ease-of-use are some of the key attributes of the new hearth appliances.

“Despite the slowdown in new home sales across the country and unusually warm early winter weather in some regions, the industry still is enjoying solid sales – with nearly three million hearth units shipped last year,” Goldman said. “Our manufacturers are introducing unique products for every room within the home, as well as for outdoor living. From traditional designs to new, sleek looks and materials, our industry is responding to changing customer tastes.”

### **Technology and Product Trends**

From fuels to fireplaces, ambiance to efficiency, HPBExpo is the only place to see all of the latest industry trends in one place.

**The Heart(h) of Your Home:** The heart of your home is often considered the room where the fireplace, stove or log set is found. Today's options may surprise you, with the newest colors and sizes, slim shapes, artistic lines and easy-to-use features.

**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 energy security. Many of the latest fuel appliances that will be heating up homes will be introduced at Expo.

**Efficiency First:** Fans, circulators and blowers that enhance efficiency and the zone-heating features of today's stoves and fireplaces are more popular than ever. With just a handful of such products a few years ago, today there are more options to meet consumers' needs than ever before.

**Heating up the Backyard:** From a gas-fired fire pit that turns into a Lazy Susan, to marble or porcelain topped bowl options to tent heaters, being outdoors can be comfortable and cozy, even on cool spring and fall nights.

**No Chimney? No worries:** A unique and low-cost hearth option, alcohol-fueled fireplaces, gel logs and similarly fueled products come in a variety of designs and sizes. They add ambiance and artistic effect to rooms that may not even have a chimney.

**A Mantel or a Masterpiece?:** Tired of your old fireplace mantel? This is easily fixed with the variety of surrounds that include products that look like marble, stone, tile or wood.

**One of the Last Design Frontiers...the Chimney:** Traditional chimney tops of yesterday are old news. Today, there are a variety of designs, custom materials and innovative ways to stylize chimney tops and protect your home.

**Handy Around the Hearth:** Bags for easily carrying firewood, stylish bins for storage, conveyor systems for moving fuel pellets to the stove, and storing firewood safely are must-have products that take the hassle out of having a hearth product.

### **Industry Statistics**

Recent industry statistics indicate that nearly 2.9 million hearth products were shipped in 2006, a strong showing considering the unseasonably warm start to the winter coupled with a slowdown in home building and home sales. Shipments of hearth appliances went down 11 percent compared with those in 2005.

Pellet-fueled stoves and insert shipments showed continued growth, with a 12 percent increase in sales over 2005 shipments. Shipments of electric fireplaces, stoves and inserts, which feature lighting and sound technology making them more realistic than ever, increased 20 percent.

Wood stove and wood stove insert shipments increased seven percent. Gas fireplaces, stoves, inserts and gas logs, although 61 percent of the hearth market, showed the biggest decrease in 2006, down 19 percent from the prior year's shipments.

"The correction in the housing market is going to bring the hearth industry shipments back to more traditional growth levels," continued Goldman. "Many of the products that customers are going to be asking for this year will be found at the Expo in Reno and at retailers across the country."

There are more than 4,500 retail hearth product stores across the U.S., many of them employing staff certified by the National Fireplace Institute®. Specialty retailers help homeowners understand the wide range of choices available to them as well as determine the type of fuel that best meets their needs.

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### **About Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (HPBA)**

The 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. There are more than 2,600 members in the HPBA.