



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

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Contact: Leslie Wheeler
(703) 522-0086 (ET)

New Data Show Increasing Consumer Demand for Fireplaces, Stoves, Inserts and Other Hearth Products

High Fuel Costs Drive Interest in Zone Heating

Salt Lake City, Utah -- Increased fuel costs helped drive shipments of hearth products up 8% in 2005 as consumers look to heat their homes more efficiently. Industry statistics released today at the Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Exposition in Salt Lake City show that more than 3.2 million products were shipped last year, with pellet appliances having the largest growth at 76% over 2004 shipments.

“The high cost of energy is making consumers rethink how they heat their home. Using supplemental hearth appliances to warm the rooms they occupy most allows families to turn down the central furnace thermostat,” says Carter Keithley, president and CEO of HPBA. “Zone heating’ puts the heat where you need it, when you need it, adding to a home’s comfort and ambiance but also reducing household fuel consumption and saving consumers money.”

A central furnace cycles on and off several times an hour and heats your entire house – even unoccupied rooms – wasting money. Studies indicate that zone heating solutions can provide energy savings of 20 to 40 percent.*

An interesting alternative, pellet stoves and inserts have become a popular, clean-burning and cost-saving supplemental heat source. Pellet stoves use fuel made from renewable resources – recycled wood waste normally destined to landfills. Some pellet stoves can also burn dried corn. Sales of pellet appliances, which include freestanding stoves and inserts, increased from 67,467 shipments in 2004 to 118,490 in 2005.

Electric appliances, which include fireplaces, freestanding stoves and inserts, increased 27% in the past year, with shipments increasing to 380,000 from 300,000 in 2004. Electric appliance technology – or heaters that can be plugged in wherever there is an outlet – has been improving the realism of faux fires by creative use of lighting, sound and mirrors.

Shipments of cordwood appliances, which include fireplaces, freestanding wood stoves and inserts, also showed impressive growth, increasing 13% from shipments in 2004. The new wood burning technology seen in today’s stoves has not only become less polluting but has become more efficient over the past decade. According to HPBA, shipments of cordwood products went from 498,630 in 2004 to 561,596 in 2005.

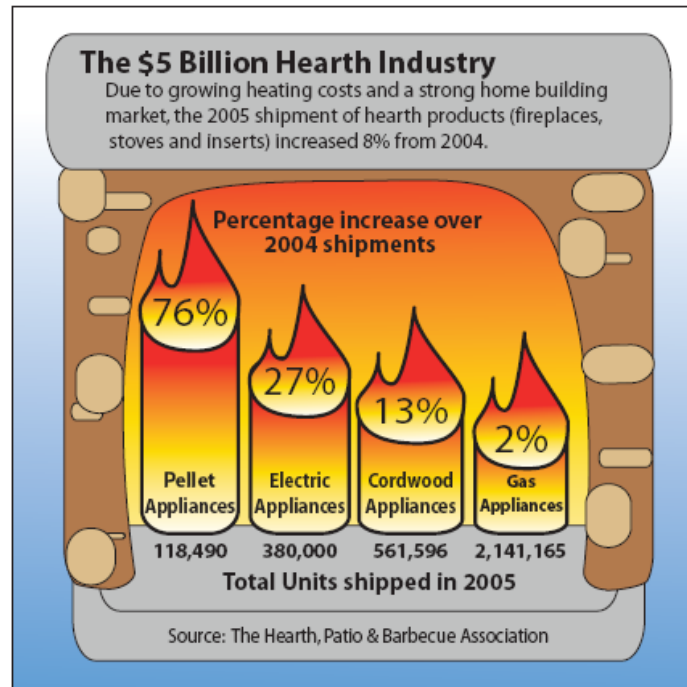
Even in a year when gas prices increased, shipments of gas fireplaces, stoves, inserts, fireboxes and gas logs increased 2% and continued to dominate market. There were 2,141,165 gas appliances sold, an increase of 37,480 from 2004. Easy, safe and efficient, gas appliances are a convenient way for consumers to have a warm fire at the touch of a switch, thermostat or remote control.

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The \$5 billion hearth industry will likely continue its strong growth due to energy security/cost concerns and continued growth in the housing and renovation markets.

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 to determine the type of fuel that best meets their needs.

*ACEEE 1990 study on Energy Efficiency in Buildings. Proceedings. Volume 9.



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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.