



HIT entertainment



For Immediate Release

THOMAS & FRIENDS™ COMES TO THE BIG SCREEN

HIT Entertainment and 'Toons for Toddlers announce the theatrical premiere of *Thomas & Friends™: Hero of the Rails* this August 29th and 30th

TORONTO – July 28, 2009 – 'Toons for Toddlers and HIT Entertainment announced today the premiere of Thomas' first ever CG-animated movie entitled *Thomas & Friends™: Hero of the Rails* in twenty screenings nationwide this August 29 and 30.

The 60-minute special will mark the debut of individual character voices for the engines on the Island of Sodor. For the first time, fans will hear the voice of Thomas and his friends, including three new characters who will debut in *Hero of the Rails*. With the mixture of Thomas' signature storytelling, and the engine's own voices, children will be able to relate to and empathize with the timeless stories on a deeper level.

"We are excited to partner with 'Toons for Toddlers for the first time to bring *Hero of the Rails* to the big screen," said Andrea Carpenter, Vice President, HIT Entertainment, Canada. "Viewing the stunning new CG-animation and hearing the characters express themselves in their own voices will make Thomas and his engine friends even more engaging for all young engineers."

'Toons for Toddlers launched in March 2009 with fifteen screening locations and have since expanded to twenty. Shown monthly, entertainment has included brands such as "In the Night Garden", "National Geographic Kids" and "Toopy & Binoo". 'Toons for Toddlers is owned and operated by Sunflower Productions which also runs Canada's "Movies for Mommies".

"We have had such wonderful feedback from parents about the 'Toons for Toddlers program and we're thrilled that we are able to expand our screenings so that more children have a chance to enjoy their first cinema experience," explains Robyn Green-Ruskin, President of Sunflower Productions. Green-Ruskin continues, "Having two boys under the age of 3, I am personally thrilled to have the first Thomas & Friends CG-animated movie participating in our program."

The 'Toons for Toddlers events is well timed as *Thomas & Friends: Hero of the Rails* will be available on DVD this September 8, 2009. For 'Toons for Toddler locations and event times, please go to www.ToonsforToddlers.com for more information.



About Thomas & Friends™

Thomas the Tank Engine was created by a father for his son more than 60 years ago and today is enjoyed by families in more than 145 countries. The #1 blue engine and his friends invite children to enter a world of imagination through the tracks of a train and the words of a story. Children embark on adventures with their engine friends while experiencing timeless life lessons of discovery, friendship and cooperation. *Thomas & Friends* makes tracks to great destinations on Treehouse TV, TVO Kids and Tele-Quebec and with downloadable episodes available through iTunes. For more information about the world of *Thomas the Tank Engine* and his friends, please visit www.thomasandfriends.com.

About Toons for Toddlers

Toons for Toddlers™ offers parents of children, aged two to five years, a warm and welcoming atmosphere to enjoy fun-filled affordable family programming, plus an opportunity to mingle with other moms and dads. All entertainment in the cinema series will feature pre-school content with a viewing length of no more than 60 minutes to accommodate children's shorter attention spans. Participating theatres will turn up their lights slightly and soften the sound for little ears. They are currently twenty screening locations across Canada offered in English and French language.

About HIT Entertainment

HIT Entertainment, owned by private equity investment group Apax Partners, is one of the world's leading independent children's entertainment producers and rights-owners. HIT's portfolio includes properties, such as *Barney™*, *Bob the Builder™*, *Thomas & Friends™*, *Pingu™*, *Fireman Sam™*, *Angelina Ballerina™* and *Rainbow Magic™*. HIT represents Chapman Entertainment's *Fifi and the Flowertots™* and *Roary the Racing Car™* in North America and Japan, as well as *Wallace & Gromit™*, *Shaun the Sheep™*, *Timmy Time™* and Aardman Classics from Aardman Animations. HIT also acts as representative for *The Wiggles®* in the UK. Launched in 1989, HIT's lines of business span television and video production, content distribution, publishing, consumer products licensing and live events and has operations in the UK, US, Canada, Hong Kong and Japan. HIT is a part-owner of US-based preschool channel, PBS KIDS SproutSM, and international preschool channel JimJam, (outside of the US, UK and China). For more information, visit www.hitentertainment.com.

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**For further information or to schedule an interview, please contact:
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