



HiT entertainment

For Immediate Release

***THOMAS & FRIENDS™* RANKS NUMBER-ONE PRESCHOOL TOY LICENSE FOR NINTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR IN THE UNITED STATES¹**

New York, NY — February 2, 2010 — For the 9th consecutive year, *Thomas & Friends™* was the number-one license in the preschool toys category in the United States, according to The NPD Group, Inc. This follows on the heels of last month's news that *Thomas & Friends* ranked as the number-one preschool toy property in the UK for the 10th year in a row, demonstrating the unrivaled popularity of the global brand as it enters its 65th anniversary year.

According to The NPD Group, Inc., while the total traditional toy industry in the United States decreased slightly (0.8%) in 2009, overall *Thomas & Friends* preschool and infant sales increased by close to four percent (+4%).

With its popularity and appeal stronger than ever, HIT Entertainment, owner of the *Thomas & Friends* brand, is poised to expand product offerings in time for this year's 65th anniversary. Fisher-Price, the brand's new global master toy partner, launches a new portable Take 'n' Play range, an array of preschool items and motorized TrackMaster sets in 2010. MEGA Brands, a global partner, will release an all-new line of *Thomas & Friends* construction toys in spring, and Learning Curve expands its popular Wooden Railway with a new "Early Engineers" line for younger kids. Additionally, six all-new CG-animated Thomas DVD titles will release in 2010 from Lionsgate, including the DVD movie, *Misty Island Rescue* in September. Lionsgate is also releasing a 2-disk "Best of Thomas" anniversary edition in June, featuring 20 classic episodes and an array of bonus features. In publishing, Random House will release 20 new *Thomas & Friends* titles throughout the year. *Thomas & Friends* live events and attractions will expand throughout 2010 with the opening of the 5th and biggest Thomas Town in the US at Six Flags America in May, a new live show from AEG/ThemeSTAR making stops at stages across the US in fall, and the 15th consecutive Day out With Thomas Tour, celebrating with children at heritage railroads across the country from March through December.

"The fact that *Thomas & Friends* remains the top preschool license in the US for 9 straight years is a testament to the brand's rich characters, powerful stories and positive life lessons," said Pam Westman, EVP, Consumer Products, The Americas at HIT Entertainment. "We have all the best-in-class partners aligned with this #1 engine, creating an array of innovative, high-quality products, and are confident that this momentum will maintain Thomas' top status for the next decade and beyond!"

¹ Source: The NPD Group / Consumer Tracking Service



About HIT Entertainment

HIT Entertainment 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, 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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