



HIT entertainment



For Immediate Release

**HIT ENTERTAINMENT'S HIT MOVIES DIVISION
BEGINS DEVELOPMENT OF FIRST FEATURE FILM BASED ON THE ADVENTURES OF
*THOMAS & FRIENDS*TM**

**WRITER JOSH KLAUSNER SIGNS ON FOR THOMAS & FRIENDS MOVIE, THE WORLD'S NUMBER
ONE PRESCHOOL BRAND***

New York, NY and Los Angeles, CA – September 30, 2009 --- HIT Entertainment, one of the world's leading independent children's entertainment producers and rights owners, today announced that its HIT Movies division, dedicated to making family-oriented films from HIT's library of iconic children's properties, is developing its first feature film based on the stories of the world's number one preschool property*, *Thomas & Friends*TM. Josh Klausner acclaimed writer of "Shrek the Third" and the upcoming "Date Night" has signed on to develop the script to bring Thomas to the big screen. The live-action film with CG animation is slated to hit theaters in Spring 2011.

"We are very excited to kick off our development slate with our first feature film based on the iconic Thomas the Tank Engine. With a nearly 65 year history rooted in publishing, Thomas & Friends is a phenomenally successful and versatile brand that appeals to children and families worldwide," said Julia Pistor, Head of HIT Movies. "Generations of children have grown up with the adventures of Thomas & Friends with its storytelling tradition, positive values, timeless lessons and rich train history. We look forward to working with Josh Klausner to translate the classic Thomas & Friends stories into a thrilling big modern adventure movie for today's children, and as well as their parents and grandparents."

Josh Klausner added, "I'm incredibly honored to be working with one of the world's best-loved children's brands. Author Reverend Awdry's robust characters and stories continue to stand the test of time, and I am excited to play a role in sending off Thomas and his friends on a new exciting adventure that will thrill and entertain the entire family, young and old alike."

Thomas the Tank Engine was created by a father for his son in 1945 and today is enjoyed by families in more than 185 territories in over 30 languages through books, DVDs, live family events, on TV, online and in toys. With its roots in publishing, more than 55 million Thomas & Friends books have been sold. More than 30 million Thomas & Friends Wooden engines have been sold, the equivalent of one engine every 17 seconds over the past 15 years, and more than 21 million pieces of track have been sold, which laid out is the distance between Boston, MA to Cheyenne, WY**. The Thomas & Friends website (www.thomasandfriends.com) has over 300 million monthly viewers. As the number #1 Home



Entertainment brand for Preschool boys, Thomas & Friends has sold over 45 million titles on DVD & VHS in the United States. The annual Day Out With Thomas tour has welcomed over 8.5 million visitors in its 14 year history in the US.

In 2010, Thomas the Tank Engine celebrates his 65th Anniversary making tracks to great destinations and will move full steam ahead with the debut of an all-new CG animated series, with new friends and new adventures. Children will hear Thomas speak, as the #1 blue engine and his friends now have a voice in telling their own stories and inspiring the imaginations of all young engineers for many more generations.

Josh Klausner is represented by International Creative Management (ICM).

About HIT Movies

HIT Movies, a division of HIT Entertainment, is dedicated to making family-oriented movies from HIT's library of iconic children's properties, as well as identifying and developing new stories and characters for future HIT family movies. Operating from Los Angeles, this division will initially focus on developing family film franchises based on HIT's leading properties including *Thomas & Friends*™, *Barney*™, *Bob the Builder*™, *Angelina Ballerina*™, and *Rainbow Magic*™. These features will expand on the essence of these world-renowned HIT brands to target a broad family audience. HIT Movies is partnering with leading Beverly Hills-based talent and literary agency United Talent Agency to create new opportunities in film, television and digital entertainment.

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.

To download artwork, please visit www.hitnewsonline.com.

* Sources: US NPD Q2 2009 - Preschool Toy Category; UK NPD Oct 2008; Australia: License to Thrill 3rd Quarter 2008

** ¹ 121,000,000 inches of track; 1,909.7 miles.

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