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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

INTRODUCING “*HOBBY UNIVERSITY*” EDUCATION FOR HOBBY DEALERS

April 28, 2008. The Hobby Manufacturers Association Education Committee announces the inauguration of its “*Hobby University*” – Education for Hobby Dealers to be held at the iHobby Expo. The “Hobby U” series of business seminars will be launched with three sessions at the 2008 Expo, October 16-19 in the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, IL.

“HMA’s ‘*Hobby University*’ is designed to assist new and current retailers in maintaining and growing a hobby store,” explained Pat Koziol, HMA’s Executive Director. “Future sessions to be offered at iHobby Expo, will focus on business-related issues such as inventory control, financing, advertising and promotion, and product buying. Hobby store owners are encouraged to send their top managers and new employees to each seminar where they will receive a certificate upon completion of each course. What better way to learn and earn at the industry’s premier trade show,” said Koziol.

Courses and university instructors will be listed in the registration brochure for the Expo to be mailed and online in July. The three sessions to be offered will focus on what it takes to grow a hobby store and to motivate and train current and new employees. “We’d like to recognize future graduates of the Hobby University certificate program at our shows and to continue to provide retail and hobby industry information to all our attendees,” added Koziol.

Additionally, the 2008 iHobby Expo™ will offer a timely education program developed with the input of members of the National Retail Hobby Stores Association. “We create a new seminar schedule for each show that reflects current industry trends,” explains HMA Education Committee Chair, Bob Staat. “We utilize feedback from HMA members and industry retailers to tap into the knowledge base within our industry, as well as industry experts. These seminars are created with hobby dealers in mind.”

This year, seminars will focus on the next phase of robotics retailing, how to jumpstart e-commerce to augment hobby store sales, and an introduction to the game industry for hobby retailers. Industry retailers have also requested a follow-up seminar on increasing their internet selling savvy presented by Practical eCommerce Magazine. In this seminar, staff of Practical eCommerce magazine will review the basics for launching an online store and present ways for improving an existing online operation such as how to choose a shopping cart, integrating online and brick-and-mortar offers, selling to local customers through your online store, using email newsletters to communicate with your customers, and more.

Dave and Kelli Wallace, owners of The Fantasy Shop Chain Stores in Missouri, will present an overview of the game industry and how hobby retailers can integrate these products into their stores. Royce Pipkins of the Chicago Area Robotics Group will provide relevant information about the economics of selling robots in a hobby store.

Additionally, iHobby Expo exhibitors will present product workshops on Thursday and Friday, October 16 and 17, 2008. For complete information on all HMA's educational offering during the 24th Annual iHobby Expo, October 16-19, 2008, visit [www..iHobbyExpo.com](http://www.iHobbyExpo.com) or call 877-TO-HOBBY.