



October 22-25, 2009  
Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, IL

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### 25<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY iHOBBY EXPO™ WAS A SPECTACULAR SUCCESS!

**October 27, 2009.** Despite a very challenging economy and significant softening in the retail sector, the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of iHobby Expo™ broke the all-time record for consumer attendance during the weekend of October 24 and 25. Total attendance for the public days was 20,606 with 10% more adults, 50% more seniors, and 75% more children attending the model hobby extravaganza this year over 2008. Saturday's attendance of 12,058 was the highest one day consumer day in the show's history. The two day trade and two day public event was held at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, IL. .

*"We are extremely gratified that model hobby enthusiasts and brand new consumers in the Chicago area came out to the iHobby Expo to enjoy the wonderful world of hobbies," stated Michael Bass (Stevens International), newly installed president of the Hobby Manufacturers Association, sponsors of the event. "Our two day event was packed full of radio control cars, planes, trucks and helicopters, model trains, plastic and die cast models, robotics, toys, games, and activities for every age. Our show floor presented the best that we in the model hobby industry have to offer and our thanks to all our exhibitors, retailers, and volunteers for contributing to the success of the 2009 anniversary show," added Bass.*

The trade portion of the four day event drew 4,982 total exhibitor and buyer attendees with 1,727 verified buyer attendees from 980 retail stores/distributorships. This compares to 1,784 retailer/distributor personnel representing 1,002 stores and distributorships who attended in 2008. 254 exhibitors (79 new to the show) took 609 booths, close to 61,000 square feet of exhibit space. *"We had a good show – a number of very good leads. We look forward to exhibiting again in 2010," said Stephanie Acton of Tri-Technical Systems, Inc.*

In addition to the action-packed show floor featuring many opportunities to see hobby products in action (including the Traxxas Dirt Track, Empire Hobby Flying Cage, Biq Squid Race Track, MRC's Slot Car Track, Chicagoland Hobby's Pinewood Derby Track, and Thunder Tech's Monster Truck Track), attendees experienced the third Phoenix Cup competition of professional airplane flyers where nationally ranked pilots from across the U.S. competed for cash and prizes in the various flying competitions held on Saturday and Sunday. The Mecha Mayhem Robotics Battle Zone, Truck Pulling Track and Rock Crawler Events were all smash hits. The Chicago Area Robotics Group (Chibots) also returned to the Expo this year to hold their "Fall Chibotica Contest" – interactive robot competitions featuring national and regional competitors and a robotic seminar for consumers. Youngsters enjoyed the Thomas the Tank Engine Kiddie Train Ride and a Legoland play area.

Appearing at the Expo on Friday and Saturday was Michael Gross, actor and model train hobbyist. Michael appeared in the long-running sitcom "Family Ties" as the dad, Stephen Keaton, and currently appears in the daytime soap opera, The Young and the Restless. Former Chicago Bears Defensive End and Super Bowl Champion, Steve "Mongo" McMichael, also tried his hand at the various radio control activity areas and signed autographs on Saturday.

HMA continued its retailer certificate series of educational seminars, "Hobby University" with an extremely well-attended program on surviving in a tough retail economy. "Retail experts, Kizer and Bender, presented this seminar and were also on hand to assist retailers find answers to their business issues," said Pat Koziol, HMA Executive Director. "All the seminars were very well attended and we will be issuing certificates of completion to the retailers who attended.

The fourth year of the ***Ticket to Ride*** program generated over \$30,000 of exhibitor coupon requests to give out at the Expo. Also, this year's Expo included "Dealer Paks" of products that retailers could purchase at significant savings. Dealer attendees need to send their Ticket to Ride coupons and travel receipts to the HMA office by November 30, 2009 in order to redeem payment.

Ed Rogala, HMA Show Committee Chair, thanked the numerous clubs and volunteers for their assistance in helping consumers at the make and take areas and presenting their train layouts on the show floor. "Without their volunteer efforts, we could not offer the range of activities and projects for the public to see and experience at the show," stated Rogala. "Our thanks as well to our 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary party sponsors, National Retail Hobby Stores Association, Electronic Model Systems, and B2B Replicas for their most generous contributions," added Rogala.

The 26<sup>th</sup> Annual iHobby Expo will be held October 21-24, 2010 again in the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Rosemont, IL. For exhibiting and attending information, contact HMA at 973-283-9088 or visit [www.ihobbyexpo.com](http://www.ihobbyexpo.com).

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