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## **THE “V” IN ATV ALSO STANDS FOR VERSATILITY**

“Far and away the best prize that life offers is the chance to work hard at work worth doing.”  
**Theodore Roosevelt**

**Irvine, Calif.** – Oregon Christmas tree farmer Earl Petty has used all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) for 10 years on his 150-acre property. The ATV can accomplish many of the same tasks as a tractor, yet at significantly less cost to buy and operate and with minimal maintenance expenses.

Richard Camera, Director of Vineyard Operations for The Hess Collection Winery in Napa Valley, Calif. uses eight ATVs. The ATVs are a “safe, environmentally sensitive and cost-effective way to help us farm high quality wine grapes throughout the 360-acre Mt. Veeder Vineyards,” he says. “They are used to perform intense agricultural activities like servicing the drip irrigation system, conducting dormant spraying in the winter, and helping with accurate grape sampling at harvest time.”

ATV Team Leader Gary Dodds, a volunteer with the Nevada County Search and Rescue Team, has used ATVs countless times during search and rescue operations. The ATVs begin searching at the outside of the perimeter and can cover a lot of area in a very short time.

ATVs make hard work worth doing, not to mention more enjoyable. ATVs are popular among business owners because they encompass the best of two worlds: the mobility of an off-highway motorcycle, and the durability of a truck or tractor. They can climb, help herd animals and reach outlying fields, and there are a variety of attachments that enable them to haul, spray and spread. The capability to outfit an ATV with cargo box, trailer hitch, sprayers and feed dispensers makes the “V” in ATV also stand for versatility.

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Today, ATVs are being used by an increasingly diverse market, with many utility companies, such as gas and electricity, using them to reach inaccessible areas. Military branches have adopted them as well, including using them to support foot soldiers by transporting equipment and weapons, and, in medical situations, to locate and treat casualties.

The myriad uses of ATVs include commercial work applications, such as farming, ranching, construction, oil production, land management, field maintenance, and facilities management. Other uses include law enforcement and rescue operations, including lifeguard beach patrol and cleanup efforts during floods, hurricanes, fires and earthquakes.

Working from sunup to sundown, whether it is plowing snow, maintaining fields or carrying equipment, ATVs have proven to be more efficient and cost-effective than traditional utility vehicles. Beyond the initial purchase savings from an ATV vs. a truck or tractor, ATVs also save businesses money in fuel and maintenance costs.

### **Fighting Fires**

An example of the ATV's versatility is that firefighters no longer need to trudge to remote areas hand-carrying 5-gallon tanks of water. Without convenient roads or hydrants, firefighters had no other way to get water to the fires. But now, Fire Chief Bledsoe of Horn Lake, Mississippi, has another option. The city purchased two four-wheel all-terrain vehicles. Each ATV has a 15-gallon water tank in front and a 25-gallon water tank in back.

"Basically, it allows us to have one unit provide as much fire-fighting ability as eight firefighters," Bledsoe said. "In a time where manpower can be a problem, this should help. Mostly we were using hand-carried 5-gallon tanks. We'd get a truck as close as we could, and then we'd break out the hand-carried tanks."

Firefighters would walk to the scene, fight the fire until the water was exhausted, then walk back to the truck for a refill. Turnaround time for the ATVs is three to five minutes, Bledsoe said, and each load of water allows about 15 minutes of intense fire-fighting capability.

Bledsoe said firefighters can easily be overcome by fatigue and heat exhaustion. "It's tough in the heat fighting fires any time," he said. "It's even tougher when you have to carry about 40 to 45 pounds of additional weight with the individual tanks."

"The maneuverability to respond to emergency situations quickly and efficiently means public safety and service agencies can better help to save lives," said Elisabeth Piper of the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA). "It makes sense for agencies to utilize ATVs when every second counts."

In cities and in public service, ATVs have taken on land management, field maintenance and facilities management jobs everywhere from golf courses to national forest services. The U.S. Department of Agriculture employs more than 800 ATVs, including 400 in the U.S. Forest Service. It is estimated that more than 1,000 governmental agencies have purchased ATVs to efficiently carry out their functions.

The Specialty Vehicle Institute of America<sup>®</sup> (SVIA) is an information source about the all-terrain vehicle industry. SVIA provides information on ATV standards as well as promoting model state legislation on ATV riding. It also serves as a liaison with state and federal agencies on ATV training and their influence upon the environment. Membership is open to all corporations regularly engaged in the business of manufacturing, importing or wholesale distribution of ATVs in the United States. SVIA was formed in 1983 as a national not-for-profit trade association and is based in Irvine, California. Its members include AlphaSports, Arctic Cat, Bombardier, Honda, John Deere, Kawasaki, Suzuki and Yamaha.

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