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MHC Introduces First Motorhome Built on the Spartan Motors Me2 Platform Desert Fox Meets RV Lifestyle Demands with More Living and Storage Space

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CHARLOTTE, Mich., and RANCHO CUCAMONGA, Calif., Jan. 29 /PRNewswire/ -- Less than five months after Spartan Motors, Inc. (NASDAQ:SPAR) introduced a new mid-engine chassis, the Me2, motorhome manufacturer MHC Group, Inc. plans to unveil the first Class A coach on this innovative platform during an RV rally in April.

Although it usually takes six months to bring a coach from the drawing board to the showroom floor, California-based MHC accelerated the design process in order to debut the Desert Fox during the Family Motor Coaching Association (FMCA) rally, which opens April 3 in Oklahoma City, Okla. The Desert Fox is built on the Me2, a mid-engine platform built by Spartan Motors that features a rear-lift deck with extra storage space for bicycles, ATVs, canoes and other "toys" that complement the RV lifestyle.

Spartan Motors, a Charlotte, Mich.-based manufacturer of custom chassis and emergency vehicles, unveiled the Me2 platform during the Recreational Vehicle Industry Association (RVIA) national show in December 2000 in response to consumer demand for more usable space in Class A motorhomes. The Company will ship its first Me2 chassis to MHC during the first week of February.

MHC's Desert Fox is designed to appeal to motorhome owners who want to get away from it all -- yet take it all with them.

"We are pleased to partner with MHC to introduce a truly revolutionary concept in coaches," said John Szykiel, president and chief operating officer of Spartan Motors. "The Me2 is exciting in that it draws on the popularity of lifestyle towables, or 'toy houses,' as they are called, that allow consumers to bring along their favorite 'toys.' Numerous studies reinforce the fact that consumers want to bring their wave runners, bicycles and ATVs along on their vacations, and the Desert Fox will allow them to do just that.

"MHC's willingness to move so quickly is unusual, but indicates the tremendous amount of market interest in the flexibility offered by the Me2. It also confirms the excitement this new platform generated during RVIA, which was the best I have seen over a new product introduction in more than 15 years."

The Desert Fox is a 38-foot diesel pusher built on the Me2 platform and featuring a rear-lift deck that will offer additional storage space. Other features include:

- * Up to 30 percent more storage space, thanks to the flexibility offered by the Me2 chassis.
- * Between two and four slideouts.
- * Unique and more flexible interior floor plans that can be custom designed to fit the customers' individual needs.
- * Independent front suspension, which offers better ride and handling.

MHC expects the Desert Fox, which is a 2002 model year, will appear at dealerships early in the spring. MHC will release more details on the Desert Fox in the coming weeks.

"Our new coach is one of the first truly innovative designs to come along in the world of Class A motorhomes in some time," said Gordie Hakes, chairman and chief executive officer of MHC. "The Desert Fox stands out from its

competitors by offering a unique floor plan, plenty of extra living and storage space, and better ride and handling. Starting with Spartan's Me2 chassis as the foundation has allowed us to build an exceptional coach that delivers just what motorhome owners are looking for: more space to enjoy the RV lifestyle.

"The Desert Fox is the first of several innovative new vehicles MHC plans to introduce over the next several months."

The management of MHC, which is headquartered in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., first saw the Me2 chassis during RVIA. The Me2 shifts the engine and transmission to the middle of the coach, allowing original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) greater design flexibility. Shifting the center of gravity also gives a vehicle built on the Me2 platform improved safety, ride and handling.

Specifically, the Me2 features:

- * A rear-lift deck, or traveling garage, that allows RVers to carry boats, bikes, ATVs or other "toys" with them on trips. This deck increases storage space by as much as 30 percent.
- * The ability to handle up to six slideouts, which increases the average living space in a coach by as much as 30 percent.
- * Easier maintenance, improved safety and a quieter ride.
- * The flexibility for more innovative interior floor plans, including a sunken master bedroom with Jacuzzi, an art studio, computer room, traveling home office, etc.

"Registration of diesel motorhomes was strong throughout 2000, which demonstrates continued retail demand for diesel coaches," Szykiel said. "Consumers are hungry for innovative designs that will distinguish their coaches from their neighbors' and, at the same time, resolve some of their most pressing needs. The Me2 platform and the new Desert Fox by MHC will give RVers what they want on both counts."

The mid-engine concept and rear lift deck are all in the patent process, Szykiel said that the Company is excited about the competitive advantage this will give Spartan Motors for quite some time. More information on the Me2 platform is available at <https://theshyftgroup.com/>.

Spartan Motors, Inc. (<https://theshyftgroup.com/>) is a leading developer and manufacturer of custom chassis for recreational vehicles, fire trucks, ambulances and other specialty vehicles. The Company also owns fire and rescue vehicle manufacturers Luverne Fire Apparatus, Quality Manufacturing and Road Rescue, Inc.

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