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New Products, Dealer Initiatives from Spartan Motors are a Hit at RVIA

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CHARLOTTE, Mich., Dec. 21 /PRNewswire/ -- Motorhome manufacturers and retailers responded with applause -- and orders -- for the new products and new technology introduced by Spartan Motors, Inc. (NASDAQ:SPAR) during the recreational vehicle industry's largest trade show in early December.

The Charlotte, Mich.-based manufacturer of custom chassis and emergency vehicles said RV manufacturers exhibited strong interest for Spartan's new intelligent suspension system (IS), which improves the ride and handling of the coach by continually adjusting to the configuration of the road. OEMs have already committed to offer the ISS on new motorhomes beginning in the 2003 model year.

RV dealers were equally as enthusiastic over Spartan's new PDA Silent Salesman, a hand-held computer that provides statistics, photos and video footage for Spartan's custom chassis products. Sales associates working with customers will have all the necessary facts and figures to complete the sale at their fingertips -- no matter where they are on the dealership lot. The PDAs can be quickly and easily updated over the Internet.

"We introduced more new products and advanced RV technology during the just-completed RVIA show than at any point in Spartan Motors' history -- and the response from dealers and manufacturers was excellent," said John Szykiel, president and chief operating officer. "The key to our success in the motorhome industry has been to uncover the hidden needs of our customers, and then develop innovative products and features that address those needs.

"In particular, ISS could be as large for Spartan as independent front suspension continues to be. ISS, which is exclusive to Spartan, dramatically improves the ride and handling of the coach as it takes the side-to-side roll out of the motorhome. Dealers who took test drives at RVIA raved about the improved performance and tightness of the ride offered by ISS.

"Now that inventory levels at RV dealerships are lower, dealers are ordering for the spring selling season. We continue to see improved demand for our products on Spartan chassis."

In addition to the ISS and the Silent Salesman, Spartan Motors introduced:

* The NVS (Envious) chassis, which featured a Cummins 300 h.p. big-block engine, independent front suspension, 860 foot/lbs. of torque and an Allison MH300 six-speed transmission. The NVS chassis will allow manufacturers to build a high-performance 34-37 foot motorhome with a price tag of under \$100,000 -- a first in the industry.

* A multiplexed chassis, which is a self-diagnosing system that features fewer -- and smaller -- wire harness bundles. Multiplexed chassis simplifies the upfitting process and improves reliability, flexibility and serviceability.

* A new tire monitor system, which allows the driver to monitor tire pressure and other potential problems from a gauge on the dashboard.

* Smart wheel capabilities, which provide an enhancement to Spartan's current system by adding the ability to dim the back lighting on the wheel.

* New dealer training program, which features hands-on technical training to help sales people understand -- and sell -- the features and benefits of Spartan's custom chassis.

"Technology remains a key differentiator in the industry -- OEMs and dealers look for innovative new products and features that will set them apart from their competition," Szykiel said. "Baby Boomers who have adopted the RV lifestyle continue to demand the same levels of comfort and convenience in their motorhomes as they do in their cars and houses.

"Our engineering expertise, in combination with our commitment to innovation, allows us to deliver the kinds of advanced technology that all our customers have come to expect from Spartan."

About Spartan Motors

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.

The statements contained in this news release include certain predictions and projections that may be considered forward-looking statements by the securities laws. These statements involve a number of risks and uncertainties, including but not limited to economic, competitive, governmental and technological factors affecting the Company's operations, markets, products, services and prices, and actual results may differ materially.

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