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**Scooters and Dual-Purpose Bikes are the Stars
in Preliminary 2008 Motorcycle Industry Council Sales Review**

IRVINE, Calif., Feb. 6, 2009 – Scooters and dual-purpose bikes were the brightest spots in last year’s Motorcycle Industry Council Retail Sales Report, which reveals percentage growth or decreases among all categories of bikes in 2008. Scooter sales through December, among the four reporting brands in that segment, were up 41.5 percent compared to all of 2007. Dual-purpose bike sales jumped 22.8 percent last year for the six brands tracked. No other categories in the report showed an increase.

“Overall, motorcycle sales were down 7.2 percent, not nearly as sharp a decline as many other consumer products in today’s economy,” said MIC President Tim Buche. “We’ll look at 2008 as a big year for scooters, dual-purpose bikes and small-displacement motorcycles. If it was smart-sized, offered great value and high fuel mileage, then chances are it was a sales success. Availability mattered, too. Many dealers could have sold more of these kinds of motorcycles if they only had them. Demand was so much higher than anyone could have expected.”

The MIC Retail Sales Report compiles U.S. sales information every month from 12 leading motorcycle distributors: BMW, Can-Am, Ducati, Harley-Davidson/Buell, Honda, Kawasaki, KTM, the Piaggio Group, Victory, Suzuki, Triumph and Yamaha. It provides an indicator of market trends. The MIC is working to release an initial estimate of overall motorcycle sales in mid-February and a final estimate by midyear. Both of these estimates will factor in all of the brands sold in the U.S.

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Among these 12 Retail Sales Report brands, the on-highway segment slipped by just 5.6 percent last year. This includes cruisers, sport bikes, touring bikes and traditional or standard motorcycles.

The off-highway market dropped 30 percent. This was among six brands, as not all of the participating manufacturers produce off-highway models.

As it seemed to several times in the past, a rise in gas prices may have pumped up sales of smaller, more economical motorcycles. Preliminary findings from the 2008 MIC Owner Survey suggest that Americans are looking at motorcycles more for transportation, not only recreation.

Through the first nine months of that study, with the final quarter results still to be factored in, commuting and errands moved up to second place among reasons for riding. Five years earlier, in the 2003 survey, commuting and errands ranked in third place, behind touring.

“Casual riding and riding for pleasure are still the top reasons for Americans to go motorcycling,” Buche said. “But more people are seeing motorcycles as green transportation that can help reduce traffic congestion and make parking easier. Even larger motorcycles are still affordable, can deliver twice the fuel economy of many cars, and all of these bikes serve up weekend adventure and socializing as well. We could find that many people who are getting into bikes just for the economics will discover the moto DNA within themselves and wind up becoming lifelong riders.”

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The Motorcycle Industry Council exists to preserve, protect and promote motorcycling through government relations, communications and media relations, statistics and research, aftermarket programs, development of data communications standards, and activities surrounding technical and regulatory issues. It is a not-for-profit, national trade association representing manufacturers and distributors of motorcycles, scooters, motorcycle/ATV/ROV parts and accessories, and members of allied trades such as publishing companies, advertising agencies, insurance firms and consultants. The MIC is headquartered in Irvine, Calif., with a government relations office adjacent to Washington, D.C. First called the MIC in 1970, the organization has been in operation since 1914.

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