

For Release: December 1, 2003

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BEST-SELLING MAZDA TRIBUTE PUTS “FUN” IN FUNCTIONALITY

– *A Sport Utility Vehicle Raised by Mazda’s Family of Sports Cars Gets Sportier for 2004 –*

IRVINE, Calif. – Since its introduction in 2001, Mazda’s entry into the compact sport utility vehicle (SUV) segment truly has been a “Tribute” to the entire SUV classification. With a host of accolades, including three straight appearances as an *Edmunds.com* “Editors’ Most Wanted,” the Mazda Tribute heads into 2004 as one of the most popular SUVs on the road. And, because its development is based on Mazda’s guiding principle: “Always the soul of a sports car,” Tribute offers a driving experience quite unlike any other SUV on the road.

“The Tribute has always been a vehicle that delivered on all fronts – utility, great styling and great fun to drive,” said David Sweet, Tribute vehicle line manager. “Since the vehicle first rolled off the assembly line, media have responded with critical acclaim and consumers have responded by making it one of Mazda’s best-selling vehicles year after year.”

The 2004 Tribute remains essentially unchanged from the 2003 model, save for the addition of optionally available color-keyed door edge guards and an interior rear-view mirror that incorporates a compass, an outside temperature readout, an automatic dimming feature at night and Homelink to control up to three separate garage or gate remote controls.

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Tribute is available in three trim levels: DX, LX and ES. Standard on the DX model is a 2.0-liter four-cylinder engine that produces 130-horsepower at 5,400 rpm and 135 ft-lb of

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torque at 4,500 rpm. DX models are equipped with a five-speed manual transmission as standard and are available with a four-speed electronically controlled automatic as an option.

A 201-horsepower (at 5,900 rpm), 3.0-liter V-6 engine with 196 lb-ft of torque (at 4,700 rpm) is standard on LX and ES models. All LX and ES models are equipped with a four-speed automatic as standard.

Tribute comes standard with front-wheel drive, while an on-demand Rotary Blade Coupling™ all-wheel-drive system, available on all models, regardless of trim, engine or transmission, gives it all-road, all-weather capability. The all-wheel drive system engages automatically when power to the front wheels overcomes the available traction, sending drive to the rear wheels seamlessly. Because the system does not incorporate a low-range, it is best suited to on-road operation and is particularly suited to low-friction surfaces such as rain-, snow- and ice- covered roads and trails.

The 2004 Tribute is more sophisticated and refined than other sport-utes and is available with many features normally found only on luxury SUVs, such as an in-dash, six-disc CD changer, six-way power driver's seat, supple leather (standard on ES) and a stylish, brushed-aluminum look to the center dash panel.

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For those chilly nights and frosty mornings, Mazda offers an optional cold package on the ES model that includes heated seats and mirrors. With other features, including car-like monocoque construction that provides an exceptional ride and strong safety benefits, spacious

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interior, standard side airbags (ES only), multi-link suspension and precise steering, the Tribute definitely is in a class by itself.

Mazda always has been known for great-handling vehicles, and the Tribute certainly is no exception. The rigid, unibody construction provides a solid foundation for the vehicle and incorporates Mazda's hallmark "Triple-H" body reinforcements in the roof, side sills and floor cross-members, which combined with Mazda's fine-tuned suspension, yield a sport ute that handles more like a Miata than an SUV.

Front suspension is by MacPherson strut with an integrated stabilizer bar to minimize body roll during aggressive driving without sacrificing ride comfort. Rear suspension is a multi-link design with two lateral links and trailing arms. This allows sufficient wheel travel while minimizing space-robbing intrusion into the passenger compartment. Because handling and drivability have been at the core of Tribute's values since inception, the vehicle is stable and reassuring under all conditions and on all road surfaces.

Beyond its supreme handling, the Tribute also is designed to appeal to young adults with active lifestyles. Given the importance of music in the lives of its potential buyers, the Tribute comes standard with a 100-watt AM/FM/CD audio system. A powerful 190-watt AM/FM/cassette/six-disc CD audio system is available on LX and ES models and includes seven speakers, including a 90-watt subwoofer.

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The 2004 Mazda Tribute is offered in nine colors, including Redfire Metallic, Pebble Ash Metallic, Light Tundra, Merlot Pearl, Classic White, Mystic Black, Dark Titanium, Glacier Silver and Calypso Blue.

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Like every Mazda, the Tribute comes with a four-year roadside assistance program.

With a call to a toll-free number, Tribute owners can access roadside assistance 24 hours a day, 365 days a year throughout the United States and Canada. For all 2004 Mazda vehicles, the company will provide a free loaner car in the event a warrantable condition requires the use of alternative transportation.

The 2004 Mazda Tribute is covered by a comprehensive four-year/50,000-mile warranty that covers every part on the vehicle except those subject to normal wear. In addition, the Tribute is covered by a five-year/unlimited-mileage corrosion warranty.

Mazda North American Operations is responsible for the sales and marketing, customer parts and service support of Mazda vehicles in the United States. Headquartered in Irvine, Calif., MNAO has more than 700 dealerships nationwide.

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