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## TOWERS BE AWARE: AWARD-WINNING INNOVATIONS, SECURE SOLUTIONS FOR 2006 TOWING SEASON OFFERED BY MASTER LOCK

**MILWAUKEE (January 16, 2006)** – From boaters, bikers and campers to four-wheelers, jet skiers and outdoor enthusiasts alike, this spring everyone who has to tow their toy to an outdoor playground can get there easier, quicker, and safer than ever with Master Lock.

Master Lock, long known for its leadership in padlocks and related security products, is leading the way in towing innovation. In time to kick off this year's towing season, the company's automotive division introduced several new products and advancements to the towing industry allowing trailer owners to get hitched and on their way to a good time with more ease, efficiency and security.

According to Jim Recknagel, general manager of Master Lock's Automotive Group, Master Lock's patented **One Tool Torque™** (OTT) technology, versatile **Universal Trailer Coupler Lock**, and **Multi-Fit Hitch** reach new standards for boat owners, campers and outdoor enthusiasts alike who tow their outdoor toys to and from America's playgrounds.

"Master Lock is constantly looking to develop innovative products that are easy to use, save trailer owners time when hooking up, and secure the trailer whether its being towed or in stow," said Recknagel. "Recreational trailer use is on the rise and Master Lock is exceeding consumer demand by offering more sophisticated solutions to specific towing needs."

**One Tool Torque Technology:** *Award-winning breakthrough design for towing system is industry first and a significant upgrade to standard towing technology*

More time will be spent *enjoying* those outdoor toys, and less time working to get the trailer hitched and towed to its final destination with the innovative OTT feature developed by Master Lock.

A towing industry first, OTT was awarded *Popular Mechanics* Editor's Choice award for its simple design and its effectiveness at addressing a common towing problem – the laborious process of safely and correctly installing a hitch ball to a ball mount.

Master Lock's OTT allows trailer owners to install and tighten their trailer hitch balls easily and efficiently with a single wrench. A hitch ball simply locks in place and does not spin while being tightened. Along with this ease, the OTT system also helps users prevent damage and incidental wear to the hitch ball while tightening. This helps to ensure a more reliable performance from the entire towing system when in use.

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OTT technology is standard on all of Master Lock's ball mounts, including the most advanced Custom Chrome, Adjustable Height and Locking ball mount models. And each ball mount works with all of the several OTT hitch balls offered by Master Lock.

### **Universal Trailer Coupler Lock:** *Preventing trailer theft when it's in stow*

Victims of property crime suffered losses of an estimated \$17 billion in 2003 in the US, according to the most recent crime records compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Some outdoor enthusiasts simply neglect to properly protect their towed possessions once they reach their final destination, where they're most at risk of theft, or "trailer-jacking."

Once towed property is unhitched and left behind, it may be as easily re-hitched and removed from the premises by a thief unless it's effectively secured. To protect against this risk, Master Lock developed the Universal Trailer Coupler Lock, the most versatile, most advanced solution to keeping trailers and trailer cargo protected.

The Universal Trailer Coupler Lock is designed to fit the widest array of trailers around, including 1-7/8", 2" and 2-5/16" sized couplers. It has an adjustable hitch ball that fits inside all tongue type trailer couplers, and locks in place to prevent anyone from hitching the trailer to their vehicle. And unlike standard coupler locks, its adjustable size allows users to lock many different types of trailers with the same lock.

Like all Master Lock products, the coupler lock utilizes an advanced locking mechanism to resist picking by thieves, and its heavy-duty cast, chrome plated, design prevents rust and corrosion. When installed, the lock's bold design serves as ample warning to thieves that this trailer won't be towed by anyone but its owner.

At a retail price of \$28.89, the Universal Trailer Coupler Lock is capable of effectively securing items worth more than 5,000 times its cost when installed.

### **Multi-Fit Hitch:** *Integrating superior quality, unmatched versatility*

America's love for outdoor recreation, combined with the record number of Sport Utility Vehicles on the road today has led to an increased need for specialty towing devices as trailer owners look to transport their cargo with a wider variety of vehicles.

Master Lock's innovative Multi-Fit Hitch continues to meet today's sophisticated towing demands. The Multi-fit Hitch comes in a class III model capable of converting a wide range of full-size pickup trucks, SUVs and Vans into tow-ready vehicles. Installation requires just a few standard tools, making the process easy for novice and expert trailer owners alike. And the Multi-fit Hitch is built to accommodate brand new vehicles as well as older models, including Chevy, Dodge and Ford pickups, and Chevy and GMC vans.

Master Lock also sells a class II Multi-fit Hitch for light pickup trucks and vans, as well as Custom-fit Hitches for Ford F-150s, Dodge Rams and Jeep Grand Cherokees.

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Pickup trucks and SUVs continue to account for half of the top 10 best-selling vehicles in the US in 2005, according to an October report from *Automotive News*. And at a retail price of approximately \$124.99, Master Lock's Multi-fit Hitch (with limited lifetime mechanical warranty) is an ideal option for several new trailer owners to safely and quickly outfit their vehicles to meet all of today's towing needs.

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### About Master Lock

Master Lock is the leader in towing innovation and is the world's largest manufacturer of padlocks and related security products for automotive and outdoor needs, home and yard, contractors, campers, power sports and bike needs.

Master Lock Company is an operating unit of Fortune Brands, Inc., a leading consumer brands company with annual sales exceeding \$7 billion. Headquartered in Lincolnshire, Ill., Fortune Brands (NYSE: FO), is included in the S&P 500 Index.

For more information on Master Lock products and more safe towing and cargo tips, visit [www.masterlock.com](http://www.masterlock.com).

