

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kim Custer
Kia Motors America
949-470-7019

KIA TRICK TRUCK CAPTURES 2ND in FIRST 2003 RACE

Strong result puts Kia in contention for Best in the Desert Title

IRVINE, Calif., (Feb. 19, 2003) – The Kia Sorento Trick Truck made its 2003 debut a positive one at the Blue Water Resort & Casino Parker 425 on February 7-9, turning in a second place finish in the prestigious Trick Truck class. With veteran Kia off-road driver Darren Skilton at the wheel, the truck survived a rock-induced timing belt problem to grab second spot in the technically difficult race run on a 140-mile loop. The event was the first of five Best in the Desert Silver State Series races Skilton’s Kia team will compete in this season.

Last season, his first year competing in the Trophy Truck division of the SCORE International Off-Road Racing Series, Skilton placed fourth overall in his Kia Sorento-based race truck. This season the Kia team not only will participate in the Trick Truck class in the Best of the Desert series, it is also scheduled to compete in the SCORE Baja 1000.

“Last season we learned a lot about what it takes to win in the Trick Truck class,” Skilton said. “The class is very competitive and filled with experienced off-roaders, but, in conjunction with Kia, we’ve built a vehicle that we believe will surprise a lot of people this season.”

- more -

Winner of the SCORE Class 3 championship (short-wheelbase SUVs) four times in four attempts – 1997-2000 – and a frequent winner in Best in the Desert Silver State events, Skilton’s Kia team will compete in the premier class of desert racing against the likes of Ford, Chevrolet and Jeep. In just four seasons at the Class 3 level, Skilton drove the Sportage to 19 victories, including two Baja 1000 wins and a Baja 2000 victory.

This year, Skilton will again face the challenge of handling a vehicle very different than the race Sportage. Unlike the small, four-cylinder-powered Sportage, the Kia Trick Truck is powered by the 3.5-liter V6 engine that is currently used in the 2003 Kia Sedona minivan and 2003 Kia Sorento SUV. The racing version of the engine produces more than 350 horsepower at 6,200 rpm.

The Trick Truck sits on a prototype tubular chromoly chassis with a 118-inch wheelbase. To support the race vehicle over a wide array of terrain, the four-wheel double wishbone independent suspension features three-inch coil-over shock absorbers in both the front and the rear.

“We firmly believe that racing is a great way to test Kia components and vehicles in conditions that no street vehicle will ever be subjected to,” said Peter M. Butterfield, Kia’s president and chief executive officer. “Desert racing puts incredible demands on a vehicle, so if our Sorento can compete in the Best in the Desert series, it will offer the reliability and durability Kia buyers demand.”

Kia Motors America is the U.S. sales, marketing and service arm of Kia Motors Corp. in Seoul, South Korea.

###