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## **Frostbike Melts Mid Winter Bicycle Blues**

*Annual February Forum Brings Touch of Spring to Bike Industry Professionals*

BLOOMINGTON, MN – Feb. 19, 2007 – Minnesota failed to live up to its frigid reputation this past weekend at Frostbike, the annual bike industry gathering hosted by QBP. Spring-like temperatures melted snow and stirred warm breezes, lending a tinge of irony to the event's glacially inspired name. Still, few of the more than 1,000 participants seemed to notice the lack of Arctic wind chills. With a world of educational seminars, product displays and festivities to engage them, the word winter rarely entered the conversation.

Held from February 16 to 18, the three-day forum drew 130 vendors, 935 bike dealers and their employees from 324 shops across 39 states. Hundreds of attendees mingled in the festive interior of the company's new distribution center, browsing aisles of innovative product displays, chatting with vendors and choosing from more than 50 seminars, forums and events. Highlights included an expanded fashion show, the second-annual Pugsley extreme-terrain bicycle race, and a keynote speech by F.K. Day, founder of World Bicycle Relief, a charitable organization dedicated to distributing bicycles in communities stricken by disaster or poverty.

"Frostbike allows dealers, vendors and QBP employees to connect on a human level. There's a real philosophical connection when people discover common values," said Todd Cravens, QBP director of sales and customer service. "Dealers are able to focus on meaningful conversations with vendors. We structure it that way. The focus is on interactions and education. It's an intense but rewarding experience."

Cravens stressed the dealer-oriented nature of the event, noting many of the seminar topics were culled from customer suggestions. "The educational seminars provide dealers with tools they can use in their own stores. For many of them, that kind of knowledge pays for the trip. It has a direct impact on their business," he said. "They also get an opportunity to see beyond the everyday grind. It's a time to explore new ideas and dream big."

Environmentalism was a prominent theme this year, with tours of the company's new ecologically designed distribution center generating a lot of interest. Built according to the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) guidelines established by the U.S. Green Council, the 135,000-square-foot structure features many energy saving and waste-reducing features, including a 40 kilowatt solar panel array. When the system

is activated this spring it is expected to fill 5 to 10 percent of the company's energy needs.

The tours also offered practical tips on recycling and other easily implemented conservation measures. QBP President Steve Flagg said many dealers approached him for details on how to launch their own environmental programs.

"It was great to share and exchange information with dealers regarding recycling and energy saving ideas," he said. "We are deeply committed to environmental values and are always exploring ways to reduce the impact of our business and industry on the planet. This really resonates with our customers."

Of course, the bicycle business remains the driving force behind Frostbike. And while the event maintains a casual, collegial environment, participants are savvy students of the industry, eager to appraise and capitalize on emerging trends. This is reflected in the show's evolution from an informal gathering hosted in the home of Steve Flagg and Mary Henrickson to a sophisticated happening brimming with elaborate booths and high-tech product displays.

"It's a progression," said Jim McCarvill, QBP senior buyer. "Every year vendors are increasing the quality of their presentations, making it more and more like a trade show."

And while the size and appearance of the event has changed over the years, QBP is committed to maintaining its intimate scale and dense concentration of premium vendors and industry-leading dealers. That, observes Cravens, is part of the enduring appeal.

"Vendors and dealers have a chance to step out of their normal roles here," he said. "They get more opportunities to talk and spend time together. It's a refreshing change of pace and part of what keeps them coming back year after year."

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