

CARU EXAMINES ADVERTISING FOR MATTEL'S 'MONSTER JAM MONSTER FLIP AND CRASH TRUCK' *CARU Recommends Company More Clearly Depict Method of Operation*

New York, NY – August 28, 2007 – The Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU) of the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., has recommended that **Mattel, Inc.**, which markets the *Hot Wheels Monster Jam Monster Flip and Crash Truck*, modify broadcast advertising to demonstrate more clearly the method of operation for the toy.

A television advertisement for the toy came to the attention of CARU through its routine monitoring of advertising directed to children. The advertisement aired during children's programming.

The commercial opens with a shot of the vehicle, which operates through the use of compressed air. A voiceover states, "[i]t pumps, jumps and gets unbelievable air." The visuals show the truck being launched into the air and crashing with another vehicle.

The commercial features two split screen shots. The first shows a hand pumping the truck twice, followed by a shot of the truck flying through the air. The second shows a hand pumping the truck three times, followed by a shot of the truck flipping in mid-air. An audio disclosure states "25 pumps needed for flip."

CARU questioned whether children could understand from the commercials the truck's method of operation or recognize that the truck must be pushed to release the compressed air and activate the crashing or flipping capabilities. Further, CARU questioned whether the commercial could create unrealistic performance expectations that children will not be able to duplicate.

Following its review, CARU determined that commercial adequately demonstrates that the truck must be pumped. CARU recommended, however, that Mattel modify the commercial to demonstrate that the truck must be pushed after pumping in order to achieve the flipping or crashing performance. CARU further recommended Mattel clearly depict the method of operation through complete scenes of real play. Finally, CARU recommended that the disclosure be clear and slow enough that children will understand its meaning.

Mattel, in its advertiser's statement, said the company "respectfully disagrees with CARU's conclusion regarding the depicted demonstration of hand pushing." Mattel noted that the commercial had ended its scheduled flight and there are no plans to air it further.

"As always," Mattel said, the company "will continue to take into account CARU's Guidelines in the future. Mattel appreciates the attention CARU has given this matter and the opportunity to participate in the self-regulatory process."

CARU's inquiry was conducted under *NAD/CARU/NARB Procedures for the Voluntary Self-Regulation of National Advertising*. Details of the initial inquiry, CARU's decision, and the advertiser's response will be included in the next *NAD/CARU Case Report*.

About advertising self-regulation: The National Advertising Review Council (NARC) was formed in 1971 by the Association of National Advertisers, Inc. (ANA), the American Association of Advertising Agencies, Inc. (AAAA), the American Advertising Federation, Inc. (AAF), and the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc. (CBBB). Its purpose is to foster truth and accuracy in national advertising through voluntary self-regulation. NARC is the body that establishes the policies and procedures for the CBBB's National Advertising Division (NAD) and Children's Advertising Review Unit (CARU), as well as for the National Advertising Review Board (NARB) and the Electronic Retailing Self-Regulation Program (ERSP).

NAD and CARU are the investigative arms of the advertising industry's voluntary self-regulation program. Their casework results from competitive challenges from other advertisers, and also from self-monitoring traditional and new media. The National Advertising Review Board (NARB), the appeals body, is a peer group from which ad-hoc panels are selected to adjudicate those cases that are not resolved at the NAD/CARU level. This unique, self-regulatory system is funded entirely by the business community; CARU is financed by the children's advertising industry, while NAD/NARC/NARB's sole source of funding is derived from membership fees paid to the CBBB. ERSP's funding is derived from membership in the Electronic Retailing Association. For more information about advertising self regulation, please visit www.narcpartners.org.