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**NWAPA ANNOUNCES 2007 MUDFEST AWARD WINNERS**

*- Results of the 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Sport Utility Vehicle Competition Presented by the Northwest Automotive Press Association -*

**Portland, OR (Nov. 13, 2007)** – The Northwest Automotive Press Association (NWAPA) announced the winners of its 14<sup>th</sup> annual Northwest Sport Utility Vehicle of the Year Competition today at the Los Angeles Auto Show.

The event – known as Mudfest™ – was held October 4-5, 2007 at Portland International Raceway. More than 20 automotive journalists from throughout the region drove and evaluated 28 different 2007 and 2008 model year sport-utility vehicles (SUVs) during the two-day competition.

Based on manufacturer's suggested retail price, the 2007 Mudfest category winners are:

- Under \$25,000:           **Jeep Liberty**
- \$25,000 - \$34,999:   **Nissan Xterra**
- \$35,000 - \$45,000:   **Volvo XC70**
- Over \$45,000:         **Volvo XC90**

Overall category winners:

- Best Value SUV:         **Hyundai Veracruz**
- Best Off-Road SUV:     **Land Rover Range Rover Sport**
- SUV of the Year:        **Volvo XC70**

Sport-utility vehicles are a mainstay of the Pacific Northwest automotive market, and journalists from this region are among the most knowledgeable critics of this segment. Mudfest is the most widely recognized event of its kind in North America. Mudfest allows member journalists to test the performance, handling and braking, as well as the on-road and off-road demeanor, of each competing SUV.

Off-road testing includes hill-climbing and descent abilities, as well as ride comfort and low-range handling. Pavement tests include a slalom, curve handling, and emergency braking maneuvers. Journalists perform additional real-world tests over area roads and highways. Packaging, versatility and overall value for money are evaluated through a comprehensive scoring procedure. The winners are then selected based on the scores earned from all the journalists in attendance.

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NWAPA ([www.nwapa.org](http://www.nwapa.org)) is a professional trade organization of automotive journalists from throughout the Pacific Northwest and Canada. Founded in 1991, NWAPA includes 39 voting members, representing more than 75 newspapers, magazines, radio stations, media groups and the Internet. Non-voting members are comprised of representatives from automotive manufacturers and related industry professionals.