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Thule Introduces Line of Contractor Grade Rack Systems

October 27, 2006; Seymour, CT- A new rack system for trade professionals that allows them to carry their equipment safely and easily is being introduced by Thule, the world leader in sports utility transportation. The Professional line of contractor grade rack systems for vans and pickup truck beds and caps, uses technology from Thule's industry leading rack systems to transport ladders, conduit, and other building materials.

"Contractors face the same fundamental challenges as our core Thule users; they have large, valuable gear that they need to transport," said Fred Clark, president of Thule Inc. "There has not been a lot of innovation in the contractor rack market and we see a great opportunity for our technologies and designs to provide trade professionals with racks and carrier systems that will allow them to transport their gear safely, easily, and in style."

Thule is introducing a new Aluminum Tri-Slot Load Bar designed with the strength to meet the capacity needs of trade professionals. The Tri-Slot Load Bars have an aerodynamically curved front face to minimize wind noise, and t-slots on its other three faces for numerous mounting options for the Professional line of innovative and time-saving accessories. The load bars attach to vans, pickup truck beds and cap systems, with new heavy duty mounting systems that are as intelligent and easy to use as Thule's sport rack systems.

Ladder Lift

To reduce the possibility of injury while loading and unloading ladders to the roof of a van or truck, Thule is introducing the Ladder Lift System. Based on proven Thule lift assist technology, the Ladder Lift has two arms that extend down over the side of the vehicle, reducing the loading height by an industry leading 40 inches. Gas shocks in the arms aid in lifting the ladder to the roof of the vehicle. The Ladder Lift has a quick clamp mechanism for securing the ladder to the system without the need of tie downs, while an integrated locking system provides additional security. The Ladder Lift is designed to carry one extension ladder and a maximum of 100 pounds.

Ladder Tilt

Thule's Ladder Tilt System provides another side-loading option. The Ladder Tilt features two slide-out arms that cantilever and tilt vertically over the side of the vehicle for below roof level loading. Four load stops hold the ladder in place, while two ratcheted straps secure the ladder to the system. The Ladder Tilt System is designed to carry one extension ladder and a maximum of 100 pounds.

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Roller

For loading ladders, lumber and other difficult long items, Thule is introducing the Roller. The Roller, a 26" long spinning cylinder, installs in the rear t-slot of a Tri-Slot Load Bar for easy rear loading, while providing uninterrupted use of the top and bottom slots for additional accessories. The Roller assists in sliding materials on to the roof of a vehicle with minimum friction while protecting the load in the process of loading.

Awning

To protect workers and their equipment in hot sun or inclement weather Thule is introducing the Professional Awning. The Awning's two aluminum accordion arms and height adjustable legs gives the system structure when deployed, while an all weather fabric provides weather protection. When not in use, the Awning neatly stores in an 8' 6" long aluminum case that easily mounts to the Tri-Slot Load Bars.

Conduit Box

Trade professionals no longer need to waist time securing conduit with load straps or worry about security with the Professional Conduit Box. This 10' 4" long box has front and rear locking end caps for loading flexibility and locking security. The Conduit Box is constructed of rust free 100% brushed stainless steel and mounts easily to the Tri-Slot Load Bars.

Tilting Load Stop

To overcome the often cumbersome obstacle of the loading gear over an outside mounted load stop, Thule is introducing the Tilting Load Stop that tilts out of the way when loading. The Tilting Load Stop mounts to the rear t-slot of the Tri-Slot Load Bar and tilts flat for unobstructed access for loading. Once materials are loaded against a standard Load Stop, the Tilting Load Stop can be adjusted along the t-slot to firmly butt against the materials. Once the Tilting Load Stop is in the appropriate location, raising it into a vertical position locks it into place. The Tilting Load Stops will be sold in sets of two.

Load Stop

The Thule Professional Load Stops are easily adjustable across the top t-slot of Tri-Slot Load Bars for maximum support while transporting ladders or lumber. The Load Stop features an oversized knob to quickly adjust and secure the stop in position, while its triangular design provides multiple strap securing options. The Load Stop will be sold in packs of four.

Thule Professional products come with Thule's lifetime warranty and will be available at retail locations in the first quarter of 2007.

Thule Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary within the Thule Group. It is the leading US manufacturer of car rack products, with production sites in Seymour, Connecticut and Chicago, Illinois. Thule's product line features multi-purpose roof racks, roof top boxes, rear mount racks, and accessories for outdoor equipment including bikes, skis, snowboards, kayaks, canoes, and surfboards. For more information visit www.thule.com.