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90 PERCENT EFFICIENT A. O. SMITH VERTEX™ RAISES THE BAR IN RESIDENTIAL WATER HEATING SOLUTIONS

Offers Unprecedented Hot Water Output, Easy Installation

ASHLAND CITY, Tenn. – April 24, 2006 – A. O. Smith introduces Vertex, an innovative option for plumbing contractors to satisfy ever-increasing consumer demand for hot water, while simplifying installation. This new 76,000 BTU power-vent residential gas water heater features 90 percent thermal efficiency. It combines higher input with more efficient combustion to produce much more hot water, with lower operating costs.

Vertex was developed by A. O. Smith in partnership with one of the nation's leading design engineering firms as part of a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) program. The 90 percent efficient Vertex will deliver significant savings on operating costs compared to "standard" 78 percent efficient water heaters. And with an estimated 127-gallon first hour delivery and 93 GPH recovery, the hot water capability of Vertex rivals that of a conventional 75-gallon tank-type unit. With a continuous flow of over three gallons per minute at 45°F temperature rise, Vertex promises "endless hot water." Consumers can rest assured that there is always hot water in the tank for that last morning shower.

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N E W S R E L E A S E

Simplified installation gives plumbing contractors a solution for applications where an existing 40- or 50-gallon tank type unit is already installed and needs replacing. The height, diameter and placement of water and gas connections on the Vertex unit are identical to standard gas units. And its power-vent design delivers tremendous installation versatility, allowing vertical or sidewall venting using 2", 3" or 4" PVC pipe.

In addition, side-mounted hot and cold recirculating taps allow Vertex to be installed as part of a combination space heating/water heating application, radiant floor heating system or any system requiring a recirculating hot water loop.

"Today's homeowner demands more hot water than ever before," said Cliff Deidiker, residential product manager for A. O. Smith Water Products Company, "We offer plumbing contractors more ways to serve their high-demand customers than any other manufacturer...from 75- and 100-gallon tank type heaters to a full selection of on-demand units," Deidiker continued. "Vertex is a tank-type unit in a class by itself. Under the right conditions, it will deliver enough hot water to meet the increasing demands of consumers who expect an endless supply of hot water. For any customer who needs more hot water, and particularly for the homeowner who wants the very best, Vertex is made-to-order for them and for the contractor," he concluded.

The technology that drives Vertex is the result of a partnership between A. O. Smith and TIAX, LLC a leading engineering product development firm. The two companies partnered with the DOE which works with a wide array of state, community, industry, and university partners and invests in a diverse portfolio of energy technologies.

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At the heart of the unit's 90 percent efficient design is an internal "helical coil" heat exchanger with increased surface area exposed to water in the tank than a standard straight vertical flue tube. The increased surface area of the helical coil has been proven to provide improved thermal efficiency in commercial products manufactured by A. O. Smith. The increased heat transfer surface area – combined with the length of the coil -- enables Vertex to accept 76,000 BTU input while keeping heat energy inside the tank longer. Higher input with more efficient combustion produces much more hot water, with lower operating costs.

Headquartered in Ashland City, Tenn., A. O. Smith Water Products Company is a leading manufacturer and marketer of residential and commercial water heaters and hydronic boilers. A. O. Smith offers contractors an additional competitive advantage in that the company designs, builds, distributes and field supports the world's broadest and deepest line of residential and commercial water heaters, as well as commercial boilers. This single source concept simplifies ordering, installation and service and is backed by almost 70 years of research and innovation. For more information, visit www.hotwater.com.

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