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**BMW of North America President, Jim O’Donnell States, “DRIVE IT HOME – DON’T TXT & DRIVE” at a Special Teen Driving School to Kick Off the 2010 BMW Championship in Chicago, Illinois**

 **Chicago, IL – September 7, 2010…** Jim O’Donnell, President of BMW of North America, LLC launched the company’s “DRIVE IT HOME – DON’T TXT & DRIVE” campaign today with the help of Evans Scholars, local teens and automotive partners including Group 1 Automotive, and the Chicagoland and Northwest Indiana BMW Centers at a special Teen Driving School to kick off the BMW Championship at U.S. Cellular Field in Chicago, Illinois. PGA Tour player, Brian Gay, also attended the event to speak about the importance of road safety. All proceeds from the driving event benefits the Evans Scholars Foundation, which provides full university tuition and housing grants to deserving young caddies.

O’Donnell, an advocate against behaviors associated with distracted driving commented, “Being a good corporate citizen is a BMW core value and we are particularly committed to promoting safe driving through eliminating driver distractions.” Additionally, he said, “Road safety goes to the heart of the company’s DNA and we advocate not only the safety of our own customers, but the safety of everyone on the road. Our teen driving school and ‘DRIVE IT HOME – DON’T TXT & DRIVE’ campaign give us the opportunity to invest in our children, raising awareness about the risks of driving and helping them to develop lifelong safety habits.”

Earl Hesterberg, President and CEO, Group 1 Automotive, which owns 15 BMW and MINI dealerships throughout the U.S., was pleased to team up with BMW to promote the early education of young drivers.

"We are excited to partner with BMW to sponsor its Teen Driving School coinciding with the BMW Championship," commented Hesterberg. "Driver awareness and safety for

teens have never been more important given the many distractions confronting young drivers today – such as texting while driving. We are proud to support BMW in its efforts to help keep teen drivers safe."

BMW’s “DRIVE IT HOME – DON’T TXT & DRIVE”campaign is an important addition to the teen driving school program. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 87 percent of teens admit to texting while driving. At the teen driving school, students learn this behavior is one of the most dangerous actions a person can do behind the wheel.

Dan Gubitosa, Director, BMW Performance Center noted, “Our driving instructors teach that it’s vital to remain focused on the road ahead and be aware of one’s surroundings. If you are on the cell phone or texting while driving, you are not able to anticipate or react intelligently to hazardous situations. Our new campaign on distracted driving creates awareness about the consequences of this action affecting not only teens but everyone who drives a vehicle.”

The BMW Teen Driving School is a grassroots initiative under the company’s Corporate Social Responsibility program combining teens, road safety and local community outreach. It is a recent extension of the teen curriculum offered at the BMW Performance Center located in Spartanburg, SC. Students improve their driving skills and increase their road knowledge through classroom instruction, driver awareness activities and hands-on driving exercises.

Since BMW became a presenting sponsor of the BMW Championship in 2007, the

BMW Championship has raised a total of $7.3 million for the Evans Scholars Foundation. BMW also offers a summer internship program that invites the scholars to work for BMW, offering them invaluable insight into their future careers after graduation. At the 2010 BMW Championship, BMW will also continue its tradition of pledging a four-year Evans Scholarship in honor of the first player who scores a hole-in-one during the tournament.

For photos and video from the BMW Teen Driving School / BMW Championship Kick Off Event, visit [bmwusanews.com.](http://www.bmwusanews.com/newsrelease.do?id=298&mid=1)

**BMW Group In America**

BMW of North America, LLC has been present in the United States since 1975. Rolls-Royce Motor Cars NA, LLC began distributing vehicles in 2003. The BMW Group in the

 United States has grown to include marketing, sales, and financial service organizations for the BMW brand of motor vehicles, including motorcycles, the MINI brand, and the Rolls-Royce brand of Motor Cars; DesignworksUSA, a strategic design consultancy in

California; a technology office in Silicon Valley and various other operations throughout the country. BMW Manufacturing Co., LLC in South Carolina is part of BMW Group’s global manufacturing network and is the exclusive manufacturing plant for all X3 Sports Activity Vehicles, X5 Sports Activity Vehicles and X6 Sports Activity Coupes. The BMW Group sales organization is represented in the U.S. through networks of 338 BMW passenger car centers, 336 BMW Sports Activity Vehicle centers, 143 BMW motorcycle retailers, 99 MINI passenger car dealers, and 31 Rolls-Royce Motor Car dealers. BMW (US) Holding Corp., the BMW Group’s sales headquarters for North America, is located in Woodcliff Lake, New Jersey. Information about BMW Group products is available to consumers via the internet at: [www.bmwgroupna.com](http://www.bmwgroupna.com/) .

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**Journalist note:** Information about the BMW Group and its products is available to journalists on-line at the BMW Group PressClub at the following address: [www.press.bmwna.com](http://www.press.bmwna.com).  Additional information, images and video may be found at [www.bmwgroupusanews.com](http://www.bmwgroupusanews.com).  Broadcast quality video footage is available via The NewsMarket at [www.thenewsmarket.com](http://www.thenewsmarket.com/).

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