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MPA AND HONG KONG ORGANIZATIONS LAUNCH INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY BADGE FOR SCOUTS

Merit Badge Encouraging Respect for Intellectual Property is World's First

Hong Kong, Encino – On April 30, the Motion Picture Association (MPA), Hong Kong Scout Association, Hong Kong Intellectual Property Department (IPD) and Hong Kong Customs & Excise Department launched the Intellectual Property Badge Award Program, the world's first Scout merit badge program focused on respect for and protection of intellectual property.

The MPA's Hong Kong program Deputy General Manager, Victor Chan, who has long been involved with the Hong Kong Scout Association (HKSA), developed the idea for the Intellectual Property Badge Award Program in December 2004, and quickly obtained the enthusiastic support of the HKSA, IPD and Hong Kong Customs. On April 9, IPD conducted the first "train the trainers" course for 25 Scout leaders, after which the leaders began to organize intellectual property training programs that will be available to all of Hong Kong's 100,000 Scout Association members.

A ceremony marking the formal launch of the Intellectual Property Badge Award Program was held on April 30, just following World Intellectual Property Day on April 26.

"Worldwide, intellectual property theft is the biggest threat to creativity today, and the war against piracy will be won through our efforts to educate consumers that buying pirated movies amounts to theft," said Mike Ellis, Senior Vice President and Regional Director, Asia-Pacific for the Motion Picture Association. "We need to make people understand that intellectual property has a value, and that its development has a cost. If people don't value intellectual property, and are not willing to pay for it, eventually the development of that intellectual property will dry up. The Intellectual Property Badge Award Program will provide thousands of young people – future leaders – with a better understanding of the value of intellectual property and of the importance of protecting it."

The Hong Kong Scout Association was established in 1915 and aims to promote the development of young people in achieving their full physical, intellectual, social and spiritual potential, as individuals, as responsible citizens and as members of their local, national and international communities. The merit badge program provides opportunities for Scouts to explore more than 120 fields of skill and knowledge. Today, there are over 28 million Scouts in 216 countries and territories.

Piracy in Asia

The MPA estimates that its member companies lose an excess of US\$896 million in potential revenue annually in the Asia-Pacific region alone. In 2004, the MPA operations in the Asia-Pacific region investigated more than 25,500 cases of piracy and assisted law enforcement officials in conducting nearly 12,000 raids. These activities resulted in the seizure of approximately 49,000,000 illegal optical discs, and the initiation of more than 8,000 legal actions.

***About the MPA:** The Motion Picture Association (MPA) represents the interests of major motion picture companies in the global marketplace. On behalf of its Member Companies, the MPA conducts investigations around the world, assists with the criminal and civil litigation generated by such cases, and conducts education outreach programs to teach movie fans around the world about the harmful effects of piracy. The MPA directs its worldwide anti-piracy operations from its headquarters based in Encino, California and has regional offices located in Brussels (Europe, Middle East and Africa), Mexico City (Latin America), Montreal (Canada) and Hong Kong (Asia-Pacific). The MPA's anti-piracy activities have helped to transform entire markets from pirate to legitimate, benefiting video distributors, retailers, and foreign and local filmmakers alike. The MPA Member Companies include: Buena Vista International, Inc.; Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc.; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Releasing International Corporation; Twentieth Century Fox International Corporation; Universal International Films, Inc.; and Warner Bros. Pictures International, a division of Warner Bros. Pictures Inc.*

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