

# High Holiday Hopes

**A**S THE RETAIL INDUSTRY looks toward the holidays, the inevitable question is what kind of holiday shopping period is 2006 going to bring? Will it be up over last year? Down? About the same?

Opinions vary. If you took a survey, you'd probably find all the prognosticators are split between the three views.

In looking at things as they stand today (mid-summer), it's clear that the signs point to a busy and profitable holiday shopping period.

Interest in horses and riding continues to boom. Interest in Western lifestyle items is white hot. The high price of gasoline appears to have impacted our industry far less than originally feared.

Optimism about the future continues to abound with retailers and vendors, something that hasn't happened for a number of years.

That said, no retailer should expect to just skate through to success this holiday shopping season. You're still going to have to pull out all the stops to attract people into your stores, and to provide them with a quality shopping

experience once inside.

To assist in that effort, we have published our second holiday gift guide in this edition. The goal this year was to bring not only specific products, but also specific categories of products, to your attention.

Defining "gift" is sometimes difficult. Can a saddle be a gift? By all means, but it's not generally what you think of when you think gift-giving. Saddles are mostly a personal choice item because they have to fit the horse and rider.

Now something to go with that new saddle could easily be a gift, and there is no shortage of these products in today's market.

Although space constraints meant we could only feature a limited number of products, we have done something that will help retailers get access to more gift suggestions from manufacturers. Images that couldn't be used in the published version will be in a special spot on our Web site, [www.tackntogs.com](http://www.tackntogs.com). Scroll down to the Current Issue Companion, and you will find links to a couple of dozen additional products that will be just a click away.

This marriage of printed material and Web content will be an emphasis for us in the future. Most of our retailers have access to the Internet. By providing this extra boost, retailers and manufacturers alike should see a great benefit.

Something else we're kicking off this month is our Retail Reader Advisory Panel. You can find more information on Page 22, or visit the panel's portion of our Web site to learn more about these people and the work they will be performing in the coming year.

What better way to make sure that everything we write is of interest to retailers than by regularly asking them what they think?

And that's just the beginning. Stay tuned for more innovations as the year progresses. ■



Paul Wahl, Editor



## Editorial and Production

Editor  
Paul Wahl

Assistant Editor  
Barb Kastens

Advertising Production Coordinator  
Sue Slominski

Ad Design Coordinator  
Val Pombert

English Editor  
Charlene Strickland

## Advertising Sales

Advertising Sales Manager—Western U.S. & Intl.  
Angela Foley

Phone (952)930-4368  
Fax (952)930-4362

Email [afoley@tackntogs.com](mailto:afoley@tackntogs.com)

Advertising Sales Representative—Eastern U.S.

Stephanie Rendell

Phone (952)930-4375

Fax (952)930-4362

Email [srendell@tackntogs.com](mailto:srendell@tackntogs.com)

Administrative Assistant

Trish Diedrich

Phone (952)930-4357

Fax (952)930-4362

Email [tdiedrich@tackntogs.com](mailto:tdiedrich@tackntogs.com)

## Classified Advertising

Cory Huseby

Phone (952)930-4371

Fax (952)930-4362

Email [coryhuseby@tackntogs.com](mailto:coryhuseby@tackntogs.com)

## Corporate Officer

Publisher

Sarah Muirhead

## Editorial & Advertising Sales Offices

Miller Publishing, 12400 Whitewater Dr.,

Suite 160, Minnetonka, MN 55343

Telephone (952) 930-4390

FAX (952) 930-4362

## Web Site Address

[www.tackntogs.com](http://www.tackntogs.com)

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