

For Immediate Release

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### **2008 MAZDA TRIBUTE: DESIGNED TO SATISFY**

Completely redesigned both inside and out for 2008, the new Mazda Tribute makes a powerful statement with a bold, tough exterior and a more upscale, comfortable interior. Offering more traditional sport-utility vehicle (SUV) styling than Mazda's other SUVs, CX-7 and CX-9, the 2008 Tribute rounds out the Mazda family of unibody-based crossover SUVs, making it the perfect choice for buyers in search of traditional, go-anywhere rugged styling. However, even with an all-new exterior and interior, Tribute has not lost its trademark *Zoom-Zoom* – after all, every Mazda has the Soul of a Sports Car inside.

“By combining the capability and styling of a traditional SUV with the benefits of a crossover, the Tribute has long been a favorite among those shopping for an entry-level SUV,” said David Sweet, vehicle line group manager for Mazda North American Operations (MNAO). “By maintaining its traditional styling, Tribute complements the all-new Mazda CX-7 and CX-9 and offers Mazda buyers an alternative choice in SUV functionality.”

### **NEW FOR 2008**

Now available in three trim levels, Sport, Touring and Grand Touring, Tribute *i* (2.3-liter four-cylinder) and *s* (3.0-liter V6) models offer more style, practicality and safety than ever before. A freshened exterior design includes new front and rear fascias, hood, liftgate, power side-view mirrors, 16-inch alloy wheels, headlamps, taillamps, standard fog lights and a raised beltline.

Inside the cabin, new color combinations, seating surfaces and ergonomic enhancements improve the overall driver and passenger experience. New for 2008, interior fabrics made with 35 percent recycled yarns can be found in all Tribute Sport and Touring models, while Tribute Grand Touring models come standard with 100 percent vinyl-free seating surfaces – a first for non-luxury SUVs in North America.

Also new for 2008, side-impact air bags and curtains, Dynamic Stability Control (DSC)\*, Roll Stability Control\*, Traction Control System and a tire pressure monitoring system are standard across the 2008 Tribute lineup, to maximize occupant safety.

*\* Not available on Tribute HEV*

### **THREE TRIM LEVELS SIMPLIFY CHOICES**

The well-equipped, entry-level Sport trim offers all the convenience, safety and utility today's young SUV buyers demand. Standard features include 16-inch alloy wheels, fog lights, air conditioning, AM/FM/CD audio system, remote keyless entry system and power mirrors, door locks and windows. Cruise control is standard on vehicles equipped with automatic transmissions. A roof rack and auto-dimming rear view mirror complete with compass, or Homelink® are also available.

The mid-level Touring trim builds on the Sport trim with the addition of privacy glass, a standard roof rack, six-way power adjustable driver's seat with adjustable lumbar and height support, overhead console with dual storage bins and front seatback map pockets. Available options include a seven-speaker premium audio system with six-disc CD changer and cargo area cover.

Offering the highest level of comfort and convenience found in the Tribute lineup, the fully loaded Grand Touring trim comes standard with everything found on the Sport and Touring trims, plus much more. Additional standard exterior features include heated side-view mirrors, automatic headlamps and a power-sliding moonroof. A more sophisticated and cozy interior features leather-trimmed seats, heated front seats, an AM/FM/six-disc CD audio system with seven speakers and auto volume control, retractable cargo cover and leather-wrapped steering wheel.

## **THE *SPORT* IN THE MAZDA TRIBUTE *SPORT* UTILITY VEHICLE**

The Mazda Tribute is an SUV with a capital “S.” Its driver appeal comes from a host of sports-oriented features, including the standard 2.3-liter four-cylinder engine, found in the Tribute *i*. This is a retuned version of the same engine found in the sporty MAZDA6 *i* sedan, MAZDA3 line and MAZDA5. Its aluminum block and head helps keep weight down, benefiting handling and improving the power-to-weight ratio.

With 153 horsepower at 5,800 rpm and 152 lb-ft of torque at 4,250 rpm, it is one of the most powerful four-cylinder engines in the SUV market. It is one of the most sophisticated too: light, efficient and refined. Double overhead camshafts improve engine breathing and high-revving response, which in turn improves performance and fuel economy. It also uses a variable induction system that delivers more power when the driver demands it, enhancing torque at lower revs and maximizing power at higher revs. The pistons are lightweight as well, improving throttle response, smoothness and the engine’s ability to rev.

An easy-shifting five-speed manual gearbox, which has short, sporty gear changes, is standard on the Tribute *i*. It uses multi-cone synchronizers (dual-cone for first and second, single for third through fifth) to reduce shift effort and a cable-shift for improved gear-change precision. The gear lever is positioned at an ideal height on the center console to be as near as possible to the driver’s right hand.

A sophisticated four-speed electronically controlled automatic transmission is available. Built-in ‘logic’ within the shift control keeps the transmission in a lower gear on steep inclines to eliminate the “hunting” many automatics exhibit on steep grades. As with the manual gearbox, the automatic’s gear lever is mounted in the center console, for sporty operation. Cruise control is standard on Tribute *i* models equipped with automatic transmissions.

The Tribute **s** gets more of everything, including a smooth 3.0-liter V6, producing 200 horsepower at 6,000 rpm and a gutsy 193 lb-ft of torque at 4,850 rpm. This engine is a retuned version of the high-performance unit found in the MAZDA6 **s** lineup. The extra power over the 2.3 means even-more effortless freeway performance and more power for pulling heavy loads. The V6 has aluminum heads and block, for reduced weight – to improve performance and handling – and better structural rigidity, to reduce vibration and improve refinement. As with the 2.3 four-cylinder, it uses double overhead camshafts to control the valves and improve engine breathing – which in turn boosts performance and gas mileage. The four-speed automatic transmission is standard.

The Tribute's sporty behavior also comes from its unibody construction and the fully independent coil-sprung suspension, as used on many sports cars. Many rival SUVs use truck-like body-on-frame chassis, which flex more and provide a much less stable platform for the suspension. The Tribute's unibody construction provides superb structural rigidity, improving ride and handling, as well as contributing to fewer rattles and a much tauter driving feel.

The fully independent coil sprung suspension – MacPherson struts at the front, multi-link at the rear – ensures each wheel responds independently to road conditions, increasing the sure-footedness of the vehicle, improving handling and road holding. It gives the vehicle more poise in difficult conditions, including at high-speeds and on unpaved surfaces, and also improves ride comfort.

The track, both front (61.1 inches) and rear (60.4 inches) is wide, which also benefits stability, handling and road holding. Nitrogen gas-charged shock absorbers give superb wheel control, on- or off-road, and maintain their composure even after tough use. The Tribute handles like a well-sorted sedan, but with all the extra benefits of an SUV.

Another sports car touch is the use of rack-and-pinion steering for greater steering precision and response. Variable power assistance means low-speed maneuvering, such as parking, is easy. Yet at higher speeds, reduced power assistance preserves road feel and steering feedback. New for 2008, Electric Power Steering (EPS), which improves vehicle sensitivity, is standard, and, improves NVH and fuel economy by eliminating the power steering pump.

All Tributes have 10-inch rear drum brakes and 11.9-inch front disks. The front disc brakes are ventilated for strong heat dissipation, to improve braking performance after repeated use, such as a long downhill stretch with many bends. Both Tribute *i* and *s* models are equipped with standard Anti-lock Brakes (ABS) to prevent wheel lock-up and skids, and to maintain steering control under braking. The four-channel system is more advanced than a conventional three-channel set-up, as every wheel has its own sensor to provide individual braking control. Electronic Brakeforce Distribution (EBD) varies the distribution of braking force between the front and rear wheels to stop the vehicle as quickly as possible.

### **THE UTILITY IN THE MAZDA TRIBUTE SPORT UTILITY VEHICLE**

Designed for real-world driving, the Tribute is at home cruising on the freeway, tackling unpaved roads or in the rough-and-tough urban jungle. Car-like front-wheel drive is standard. If extra traction is necessary – either for off-road driving or pulling heavy loads in slippery conditions – the Tribute is available with Mazda’s innovative Active Torque Control Coupling (ATCC) four-wheel-drive system. This ingenious system is available on both four-cylinder and V6 Tribute models equipped with automatic transmissions.

A sophisticated computer monitors the engine, wheel speeds and transmission, and automatically transfers torque between the front and rear wheels. The split to the rear wheels varies between zero and 50 percent. It senses where traction is strongest and delivers the appropriate amount of torque for optimal grip.

Unlike mechanical systems, which react only to wheel slip, ATCC predicts wheel spin, and prevents it from happening in the first place. It changes continually, to suit ever-changing driving conditions, and is also completely automatic, so no driver settings or adjustment is necessary. It reacts faster than a hydraulic system because there is no lag time waiting for a viscous fluid to heat up before splitting power between the axles. The system is also useful on-road – such as in snow or heavy rain, or any time where there is a potential for loss of traction. Compared with less sophisticated four-wheel drive systems, ATCC improves driving responsiveness, handling and fuel economy.

Like all good SUVs, the Tribute has a commanding driving position, great visibility, good ground clearance, a tall roof and large cargo area. The elevated seating position, and superb visibility means you get a better view of the road when weather conditions are bad, such as heavy driving rain.

The vehicle seats five adults in comfort. For extra versatility, there are up to four storage areas within easy reach of the driver's seat, and five near the front passenger. In addition, a center console storage compartment with removable bins offers enough space to store a laptop. Both front doors have storage compartments, as do the backs of each front seat.

There is 29.2 cubic feet of carrying space behind the rear seat when it is up, and 66.3 cubic feet when the seatback is reclined. The rear seat is asymmetrically split 60:40, which improves carrying versatility. For extra practicality, the tailgate features a rear window that lifts separately, ideal for loading less heavy objects.

Safety is a priority. The all-steel unibody construction is not only very rigid, it is also enormously strong. The crumple zones and 'Triple H' construction are designed to absorb and redirect energy away from the passenger cabin. 'Triple H' refers to the H-shaped structures in the sides, floor and roof that provide a rigid cell around the cockpit. Side impact door beams are also fitted, to further improve safety in a side impact.

The Tribute comes with advanced front airbags that use various sensors to deploy each front airbag with exactly the right amount of force to deal with the impact. Sensors measure the weight of the seat occupants, the force of the impact and the seat distance from the steering wheel. Front side impact airbags, fitted into the seats rather than the doors – so they work equally effectively, irrespective of seat position – are standard. Side-impact air curtains, (rollover is not the primary purpose, it is one of the purposes), are also standard.

Front seat belts have pre-tensioners to reduce slack in the early moments of an impact. In the rear, all three seats have three-point belts and adjustable head restraints for extra safety. For additional safety, Dynamic Stability Control (DSC), Roll Stability Control (RSC), Traction Control System and a tire pressure monitoring system are also standard.

Whether the driving conditions are dry and fast or slippery and moderately paced, exceptional handling is assured.

All 2008 Tributes come with a roadside assistance program. With a call to a toll-free number, owners can access roadside assistance 24 hours a day, 365 days a year throughout the United States and Canada. In addition, a comprehensive three-year/36,000-mile warranty covers every part on the vehicle except those subject to normal wear. Also, all 2008 Mazdas receive a five-year/60,000 mile powertrain warranty and a five-year/unlimited-mileage corrosion warranty.

Headquartered in Irvine, Calif., Mazda North American Operations oversees the sales, marketing, parts and customer service support of Mazda vehicles in the United States, Canada and Mexico through nearly 900 dealers. Operations in Canada are managed by Mazda Canada, Inc., located in Ontario, Canada, and in Mexico by Mazda Motor de Mexico in Mexico City.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information on Mazda vehicles, visit the online Mazda media center at [www.mazdausamedia.com](http://www.mazdausamedia.com).