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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tough as a MULE™ (Side x Side)

FOOTHILL RANCH, Calif. (September 2, 2016) – It’s an awesome urban legend that the Beastie Boys wrote “(You Gotta) Fight for Your Right (to Party!)” on a cocktail napkin in five minutes in 1986. Well, something similar happened – although not quite so fast! – when Rocky Mountain Kawasaki’s Joe Masek, Bill Gray and Jeff Mills attended an August 1980 dealer meeting in San Diego, California. While discussing the merits of the new KLT200 three wheel ATV for farm and ranch work, the trio hatched a concept for an even better four wheel machine, with Masek and Gray tossing out ideas and Mills sketching them on – yep – a cocktail napkin. The concept would eventually become the first side-by-side for Kawasaki, the 1988 Kawasaki MULE™ 1000 four-wheel utility vehicle.

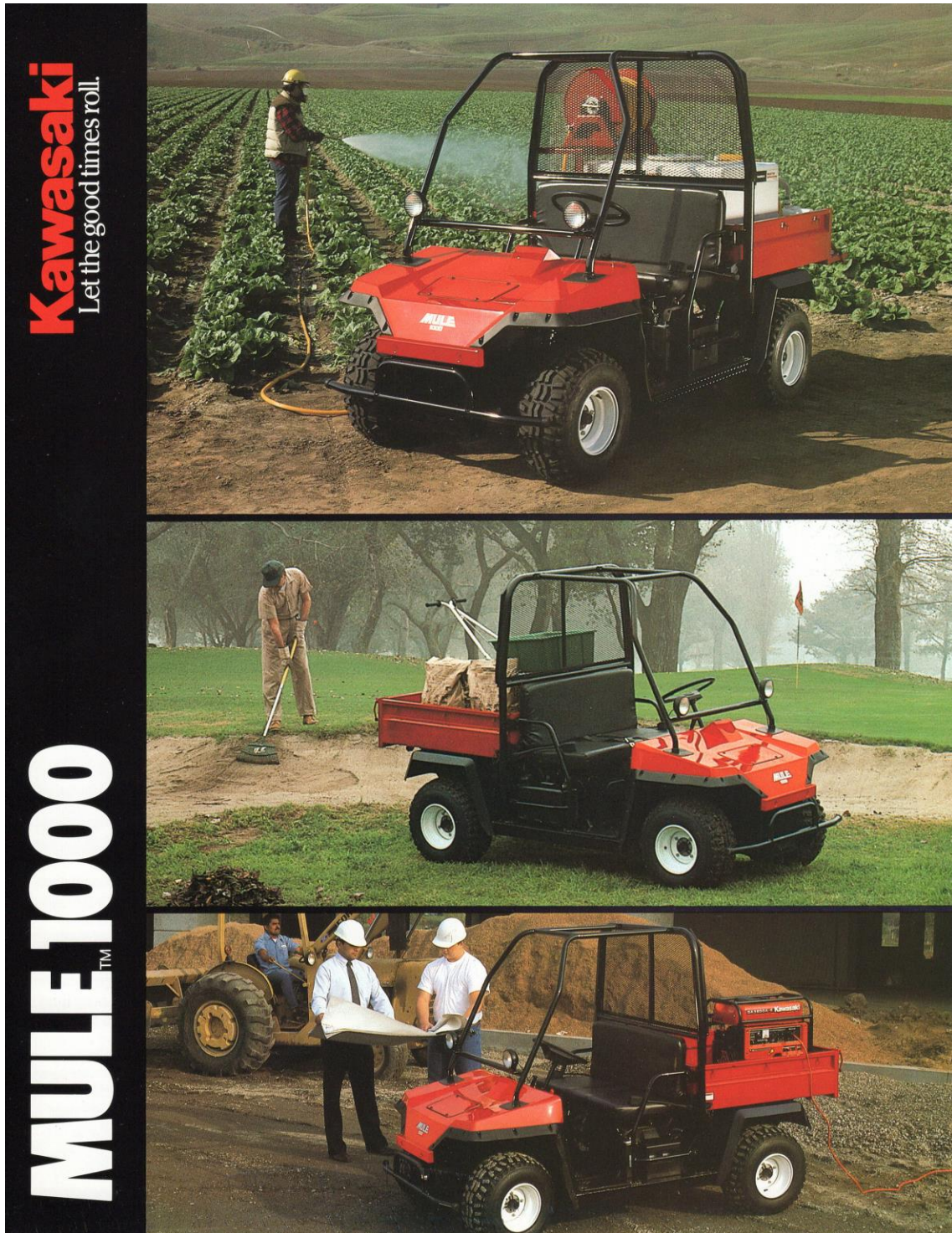
According to *The Glint of Chrome in Young Men’s Eyes*, when the trio showed their work to KMC Research and Development (R&D) director Misao “Lyndon” Yurikusa, they described it as “a vehicle with four wheels that could carry two people and heavier loads than an ATV.” The original drawings specified a 250cc to 440cc four-stroke engine with electric starting, a 500-pound capacity bed plus front storage, running and spot lights, an automatic transmission, and later four-wheel-drive capability. Mr. Yurikusa was so enthused that he became the project’s most ardent supporter during its multiyear development.

The first prototype was powered by a 340cc two-stroke snowmobile engine so noisy that it reportedly scattered cows and pigs during farm testing, causing engineers to search for a four-stroke alternative after all. They eventually adopted the liquid-cooled 454cc parallel twin from the 454 LTD cruiser. Fast forward to 1987, and after plenty more R&D work, the production model was nearing completion. Codenamed “Pony” in Japan, it had yet to receive a name for the United States market. Bob Lehner from Bozell Advertising, Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A.’s agency at the time, suggested “MULE” – an acronym for Multi-Use Light Equipment. The name stuck.

Launched in 1988 to strong acclaim, the MULE™ side-by-side lineup soon included a 4WD model, the 535cc MULE™ 2010, along with an easy-on-the-turf 2020 model for golf courses, an industrial-spec 2030 model, and a compact 500 model. The three-cylinder diesel MULE™ 2500 arrived for

1999, with the four-passenger 3000 following for 2005. The range has since grown to include 27 different models in four lines, including the 812cc MULE™ PRO Series, 993cc MULE™ PRO Diesel Series, 401cc MULE SX™ Series and 617cc MULE™ Standard Series.

Now nearly 29 model years on, it's definitely been a great ride – for a MULE™.



1988 MULE™ 1000 Brochure Cover

ABOUT KAWASAKI

Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd. (KHI) started full-scale production of motorcycles over a half century ago. The first Kawasaki motorcycle engine was designed based on technical know-how garnered from the development and production of aircraft engines, and Kawasaki's entry into the motorcycle industry was driven by the company's constant effort to develop new technologies. Numerous new Kawasaki models introduced over the years have helped shape the market, and in the process have created enduring legends based on their unique engineering, power, design and riding pleasure. In the future, Kawasaki's commitment to maintaining and furthering these strengths will surely give birth to new legends.

Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A. (KMC) markets and distributes Kawasaki motorcycles, ATVs, side x sides, and Jet Ski® watercraft through a network of approximately 1,100 independent retailers, with close to an additional 7,700 retailers specializing in general purpose engines. KMC and its affiliates employ nearly 3,100 people in the United States, with approximately 260 of them located at KMC's Foothill Ranch, California headquarters.

Kawasaki's tagline, "Let the good times roll.®", is recognized worldwide. The Kawasaki brand is synonymous with powerful, stylish and category-leading vehicles. Information about Kawasaki's complete line of powersports products and Kawasaki affiliates can be found on the Internet at www.kawasaki.com.