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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

So Far. So Fast.

In March 1973, three Kawasaki Z1s and a small team of riders set 46 FIM and AMA speed records.

IRVINE, Calif. (April 1, 2016) – Priced at just \$1,895, the 1973 903cc Z1 was both the world’s first air-cooled, DOHC inline four production motorcycle – and the world’s most powerful production bike. To prove its strength, Kawasaki aimed equally high by chasing the world’s toughest speed record – 24 hours on the high banks of Daytona International Speedway.

On Wednesday, March 13, 1973, eight riders, mechanics from Kawasaki Motors Corp., U.S.A. (KMC), officials, equipment and three Z1s arrived at Daytona. Two featured lowered handlebars, Goodyear racing tires and heavy-duty shocks for the 24-hour attempt, while the third bike sported limited engine mods and a full fairing in pursuit of one-lap, 10-kilometer and 100-kilometer closed-course records.

That afternoon, Team Kawasaki rider Yvon Duhamel readied himself for the one-lap record attempt. He accelerated the faired Z1 onto the tri-oval, took a single warmup lap, and then howled to a new record of 160.288 mph. The celebration was jubilant but brief, as the next morning Duhamel climbed back aboard the special Z1 and launched a standing-start attempt on the 10-km and 100-km world records. Barely 26 minutes later, the Kawasaki had done it again, covering 10 kilometers at 150.845 mph and 100 kilometers at 141.439 mph. Three for three so far!

But the toughest challenge was still ahead. On Thursday morning, March 14, the 24-hour record run began, with team riders Art Baumann, Cliff Carr, Gary Nixon, Masahiro Wada and Hurley Wilvert, journalists Cook Neilson and John Weed, and KMC’s Bryon Farnsworth targeting a steady 120 mph to grab the record while minimizing tire wear.

The riders rotated through 150-mile shifts, stopping for fuel every 37 minutes and new tires every six hours, thanks to quick work by KMC mechanics Jeff Shetler and Randy Davis. Finally, the late winter sunset arrived at 6:15 PM, leading riders into an inky Florida night. “At 130 mph it’s difficult to stay within the lines,” Farnsworth admitted.

Despite thick fog and one broken chain, both bikes raced through the night until finally, just after 9:30 AM on Friday, March 15, Kawasaki clinched the 24-hour record with the leading Z1 going 2,630.402 miles at 109.602 mph, beating the previous record by nearly 20 mph. In all, the three-day effort claimed 46 AMA and FIM performance records – setting an enormous benchmark for the Z1 in the process.



Z1 24 Hour Record



Bryon Farnsworth

To see a fantastic video of the Z1 record attempts [click here!](#)

The title? “So Far. So Fast.” Perfect.

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 300 of them located at KMC’s Irvine, 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.