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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### The Topaz - "A Boat in a Box"

**Annapolis, MD (July 26, 2010)** – Topaz Sailing is pleased to announce it can now ship boats virtually anywhere faster, easier, safer and more affordably with its' new custom designed packaging. Dubbed "A Boat in a Box"<sup>TM</sup> the new environmentally friendly, custom packaging, allows the Topaz to be shipped anywhere in the continental United States through UPS Freight. This first of its kind innovation in boat delivery allows Topaz customers to get their boats delivered when they want, where they want, at dramatically less shipping costs and risk of damage.

The packaging design was the result of a semester project by Virginia Tech University students and faculty at the internationally reknown Center for Unit Load Design in Blacksburg, VA. The students, all members of the Virginia Tech chapter of the Institute of Packaging Professionals, and led by Ralph Rupert, Director of the Center for Load Design, Jim Bisha, Virginia Tech Graduate Student, and Russell Car, Virginia Tech Professor, were tasked with the following criteria: create lightweight, inexpensive, packaging, that is easy and efficient to assemble, using green technology, to protect the Topaz sailing dinghy during cross-country shipping.

The result is packaging that is affordable, weights less than 45 pounds, and can be assembled quickly. The students designed two custom, light-weight, recyclable corrugated pallets, with strategically placed lift points, in addition to a unique cradle system, also made of recyclable corrugated material. The cradle is then affixed to the top of the pallets and both protects and stabilizes the hull of the boat. In addition corrugated honeycomb reinforcement blocks were also designed to be placed on all vulnerable areas of the boat.

This unique, light-weight custom packaging allows the Topaz sailing dinghy to be easily lifted and transported long distances without sustaining damage or significantly increasing the shipping cost while also having the benefit of reducing waste and easy for the customer to open and discard the recyclable packaging material.

“We are very appreciative to the team at Virginia Tech whose knowledge and expertise has allowed Topaz Sailing customers to receive our boats quicker, safer and at less cost while protecting the environment,” said Topaz Owner, Karen Morris.

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Founded in 1872 as a land-grant college, Virginia Tech is the most comprehensive university in the Commonwealth of Virginia and is among the top research universities in the nation. Today, Virginia Tech’s nine colleges are dedicated to quality, innovation, and results through teaching, research, and outreach activities. At its 2,600-acre main campus located in Blacksburg and other campus centers in Northern Virginia, Southwest Virginia, Hampton Roads, Richmond, Southside, and Roanoke, Virginia Tech enrolls more than 28,000 undergraduate and graduate students from all 50 states and more than 100 countries in 180 academic degree programs.

Topaz Sailing Systems, LLC, located in Annapolis, MD, sells the full line of Topper sailboats in the United States at [www.topazsailing.com](http://www.topazsailing.com) and is owned and operated by passionate sailors. Topaz Sailing Systems goal is to make it easy for sailors of all ages and experience levels to enjoy the excitement and pleasure of performance sailing. Topaz Sailing

*Topaz Sailing Systems – Guaranteed Fun!*

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