

PR Newswire Association. (2003). "SEMA takes action to curtail illegal street racing."  
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PR Newswire

May 29, 2003 Thursday

**SECTION:** LIFESTYLE

**DISTRIBUTION:** TO BUSINESS, AUTO AND EDUCATION EDITORS

**LENGTH:** 809 words

**HEADLINE:** SEMA Takes Action to **Curtail Illegal Street Racing;**  
Racers Against Street **Racing** Launches Teen Education Program About Legal  
Alternatives to Hazardous Street-Racing Practices

**DATELINE:** DIAMOND BAR, Calif. May 29

**BODY:**

Racers Against Street **Racing** (RASR), a grass-roots enthusiast group that promotes legal alternatives to **illegal street racing**, will take its program to driver education classrooms throughout the country.

"Young drivers today are surrounded by media messages that depict street **racing** as glamorous and OK," said Christopher J. Kersting, president and CEO of **SEMA**, the Specialty Equipment Market Association, which administers RASR. He noted that it's a rare day when there isn't news about the unfortunate results of a street-racing incident in this country.

"We want to get a head-start on educating new drivers about the dangers of street **racing** and aggressive driving stunts that put them, and others, at risk of serious injury and death," Kersting said. "**SEMA** is delighted that new drivers are embracing the opportunity to improve the performance and appearances of their vehicles. RASR is launching this program so that enthusiasts will take their **racing** activities to organized events at racetracks."

The RASR program, currently being tested in driver ed classrooms, consists of a

curriculum and video. It addresses the realities of street **racing**, informs the students about local street-racing laws, and provides information about local legal alternatives. The classroom lesson is augmented with a graphic videotape produced for the MTV show "Flipped." Several members of RASR who compete in professional drag-racing competitions nationally are featured in the TV show.

The RASR program says "It's all about time slips. You can brag that your car will go a quarter-mile in ten seconds, but you can't prove that boast without an official time slip from a racetrack. That's your real proof."

Around the country, local racetracks are offering "street legal **racing** night" programs to young drivers who want to race their cars and come away with the proof of their vehicle's performance and their driving proficiency. In Irwindale, Calif., the local police are involved to the extent that they are giving "tickets" - to go race at the Irwindale Speedway at no charge. Other venues with programs for enthusiasts include Old Bridge Township Raceway Park (Englishtown), N.J., Firebird International Raceway (Phoenix), San Diego's Qualcomm Stadium, and Interstate Dragway, Moorhead, Minn.

Besides the **racing** opportunity, some racetracks add other lifestyle attractions to their street-legal race events. These include car shows, climbing walls, live music performances and foam play pits.

Gregg Guenthard, RASR's director, said, "You don't have to be a champion racer like John Force or Stephan Papadakis to be a winner at the motorsports track. You can get your adrenalin rush with your own daily driver car. These tracks provide a controlled environment for the drivers and their vehicles."

Several corporate members of SEMA's Sport Compact Council are financial sponsors of the outreach program to their young customers and customer-prospects. Founding sponsors include North American Honda, Motorsports Direct, and Polk Audio, and industry sponsors include Advanced Clutch Technology, APC (American Products Company), NOPI, Pep Boys, and RELCO/Reliable Automotive. SEMA, whose Sports Compact Council houses the RASR program, is also a founding sponsor.

The spokespeople for RASR include professional drag racers Ed Bergenholtz, JoJo Callos, Abel Ibarra, Lisa Kubo, Len Monserrat, Craig Paisley, Stephan Papadakis, Angela Proudfoot, and Chris Rado.

RASR, Racers Against Street **Racing**, became a SEMA activity in fall 2002.

SEMA represents the \$27 billion specialty automotive industry. Founded in 1963, the trade association has more than 4,500 member companies. It is the authoritative source of research data, trends and market growth information for automakers and the specialty auto products industry. The industry provides appearance, performance, comfort,

convenience and technology products for passenger cars, minivans, trucks, SUVs and recreational vehicles. For more information, contact **SEMA** at 1575 S. Valley Vista Dr., Diamond Bar, CA, 91765-3914; call 909/396-0289; or visit [www.sema.org](http://www.sema.org) , [www.enjoythedrive.com](http://www.enjoythedrive.com) and [www.rasr.info](http://www.rasr.info).

Image available at [www.sema.org/images/31649.jpg](http://www.sema.org/images/31649.jpg)

CAPTION, Image 1: RASR is taking its program to educate young drivers about legal alternatives to **illegal** street **racing** to driver education classes around the country. According to RASR, Racers Against Street **Racing**, it's all about time-slips, the official piece of paper handed to competitors at racetracks. They prove how quickly your car can go a certain distance.

Image available at [www.sema.org/images/31650.jpg](http://www.sema.org/images/31650.jpg)

CAPTION, Image 2: Racetracks across the country have opened their facilities to young drag racers, offering an alternative to the dangers of **illegal** street **racing**.

**SOURCE SEMA** (Specialty Equipment Market Association)

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**LOAD-DATE:** May 30, 2003