

EMBARGO DATE: February 7, 2001 at 10:30 AM ES**TMS - - 014 -- 01****Toyota unveils RSC "rugged sport coupe" concept****At CHICAGO Auto Show**

CHICAGO, Feb. 7, 2001 --- Toyota unveiled its RSC "Rugged Sport Coupe" concept vehicle at a press conference at the 2001 Chicago Auto Show.

The Toyota RSC concept was initiated and developed by CALTY Design Research, Toyota's North American design center in Newport Beach, California. According to CALTY vice president of design, Kevin Hunter, the RSC concept was developed to explore new possibilities for a next-generation sports car, aimed specifically at young new-car buyers.

"Traditionally, sports cars are influenced by high-performance on-track motor sports," said Hunter. "For the RSC concept, we looked at one of the world's most popular off-track racing formats for inspiration. Toyota's long history in the World Rally Championships, along with the aggressive, rugged appeal of its race cars with a young audience, made for an ideal conceptual direction."

In its effort to develop all-new products with strong appeal to young buyers, Toyota took a completely different approach in developing the RSC concept. CALTY's primary function is to submit styling renderings, specific to products that have already been finalized for development by engineers and product planners. About a year ago, Toyota engineering asked CALTY to submit vehicle concept renderings of its own. CALTY was given no specific guidelines regarding platform, power trains or dimensions. Instead of translating a predetermined vehicle concept into a visual rendering, CALTY designers were asked to create an entirely new concept.

The Rugged Sport Coupe is a pure concept vehicle. The intent, from the very beginning, was to develop a purely visual statement that would connect emotionally with young buyers. A statement that, intentionally, is not meant for everyone to understand, or appreciate.

The RSC combines a sporty two-plus-two car body with four-wheel drive hardware and styling cues that result in a fresh variation on "rugged vehicle" thinking. The fuselage body design combines muscular wheel flares with edgy mechanical forms that communicates a built-for-abuse durability. The look is assembled or constructed, rather than organic.

The interior of the RSC was designed to convey the sparse, functional simplicity of a race car. The look and feel suggests the notion that serious work takes place in this cockpit and that weight savings and accessibility take precedent over amenities.

The instrument panel has a sophisticated, hand-crafted appearance: built in a race shop, rather than an assembly line. The large metal face-plate with round inset instrumentation communicates precision and ruggedness. The high-mounted sequential shifter is proposed, based on rally-car influence, as are the GPS monitor and lightweight carbon-fiber-backed racing seats with full harness restraints.

With the unveiling of the RSC at the Chicago Show, and the world premiere of the all-new Matrix last month in Detroit, Toyota's commitment to young new-car buyers is more apparent than ever. Much of the same thinking that went into the development and design of the Matrix went into the development of the RSC. Both vehicles were designed at CALTY. Both were developed to push the hot-buttons of young buyers by combining high performance, high image and high utility...with affordable pricing.

"Each new generation is different, with its own culture and its own unique footprint," said TMS senior vice president and general manager, Don Esmond. "To strike a chord with young buyers,

Toyota knows it must offer widely diverse products....at very attractive price points. The all-new Matrix and the RSC concept are excellent examples of Toyota's dedication to this emerging force in the marketplace. They won't be the last."

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TOYOTA RSC CONCEPT SPECIFICATIONS

	Millimeters	Inches
Wheelbase	2490	98.1
Overall Length	4115	162.1
Overall Height	1550	61.1
Overall Width	1850	72.9

Tires.....31x10.5R19

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