**2012 KIA SOUL TOPS “10 BEST BACK-TO-SCHOOL CARS” LIST**

**BY KELLEY BLUE BOOK’S KBB.COM**

***Kia’s Popular Urban Cruiser is Number One Among Cars Less Than $16,000***

* Soul’s versatile package and affordable price makes it an ideal ride for students
* Hip hatchback embodies a youthful exuberance and a fun attitude

**IRVINE, Calif., August 8, 2012** – The award-winning Kia Soul has been spotlighted once again, this time being named as this year’s No. 1 vehicle on the coveted “10 Best Back-to-School Cars in 2012” list by Kelley Blue Book’s KBB.com, a leading provider of new and used car information. Lauded for its exceptional value, reliability and style, the Soul is a uniquely eye-catching and affordable way for students to get to class this fall. The funky urban passenger vehicle also was praised for its roomy interior, responsive powertrain and frugal fuel economy. The KBB.com accolade comes on the heels of the Soul being honored as class best by two major back-to-back J.D. Power and Associates Studies: IQS and APEAL.

“The Soul being named to the top spot on the ‘10 Best Back-To-School Cars of 2012’ list by Kelley Blue Book’s KBB.com shows just how relevant the Kia brand has become with the younger consumer,” said Michael Sprague, executive vice president, marketing & communications, Kia Motors America. “This honor recognizes the Soul for a host of attributes ranging from innovative styling to smart personalization options to outstanding safety, all of which make it a favorite among students and their parents, alike.”

Editors from Kelley Blue Book’s KBB.com evaluated the most affordable vehicles of 2012 and then selected the 10 offerings which best met the needs and wants of students. All vehicles on this list are available for under $16,000.

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“With a low price tag, roomy interior and singular looks, the Kia Soul charms with a practical but youthful exuberance,” asserted the editors of Kelley Blue Book’s KBB.com. “And it gets even better for 2012, gaining direct injection technology and six-speed transmissions that yield bumps in power, responsiveness and fuel economy. Stir in tastefully refreshed exterior and interior bits, and the Soul convincingly grabs the top spot on our list of Best Back-to-School Cars for 2012.”

For more information about KBB.com’s “10 Best Back-to-School Cars of 2012,” visit <http://www.kbb.com/car-reviews-and-news/top-10/best-back-to-school-cars-2012/>.

**Kia’s Unprecedented Growth**  
           Kia Motors is one of the world’s fastest moving global automotive brands; from 2009-2011 Kia launched more new vehicles in the U.S. than any other automaker, and under the guidance of chief design officer Peter Schreyer earned a reputation as an industry leader in automotive styling.  Kia Motors America’s full line of fuel-efficient and fun-to-drive cars and CUVs has earned critical acclaim and dramatically increased consumer awareness, perception and consideration for the brand. In 2011, KMA recorded its 17th consecutive year of market share growth, thanks in part to the largest increase of any major brand in perceived quality[[1]](#footnote-1) and the industry’s highest brand loyalty ranking[[2]](#footnote-2). Kia’s U.S.-based manufacturing facility in West Point, Georgia – KMMG – is responsible for the creation of more than 10,000 plant and supplier jobs and builds two of the company’s best-selling vehicles in the U.S. – the Sorento CUV and Optima midsize sedan\*.  Kia’s value and technology-laden lineup also includes the Sportage compact CUV, Soul urban passenger vehicle, Optima Hybrid, Forte compact sedan, Forte 5-door compact hatchback, Forte Koup two-door coupe, Rio and Rio 5-door sub-compacts and Sedona minivan.

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**About Kia Motors America**

Kia Motors America is the marketing and distribution arm of Kia Motors Corporation based in Seoul, South Korea. KMA offers a complete line of vehicles through more than 755 dealers throughout the United States and serves as the "Official Automotive Partner" of the NBA and LPGA. In 2011, KMA recorded its best-ever annual sales total and became one of the fastest growing car companies in the U.S[[3]](#footnote-3). Kia is poised to continue its momentum and will continue to build the brand through design innovation, quality, value, advanced safety features and new technologies.

Information about Kia Motors America and its full vehicle line-up is available at its website – [www.kia.com](http://www.kia.com/). For media information, including photography, visit [www.kiamedia.com](http://www.kiamedia.com/).

**About Kelley Blue Book (**[www.kbb.com](http://www.kbb.com/)**)**

Founded in 1926, Kelley Blue Book, The Trusted Resource®, is the only vehicle valuation and information source trusted and relied upon by both consumers and the industry.  Each week the company provides the most market-reflective values in the industry on its top-rated website www.kbb.com, including its famous Blue Book® Trade-In and Suggested Retail Values and Fair Purchase Price, which reports what others are paying for new cars this week.  The company also provides vehicle pricing and values through various products and services available to car dealers, auto manufacturers, finance and insurance companies as well as governmental agencies.  KBB.com provides consumer pricing and information on cars for sale, minivans, pickup trucks, sedan, hybrids, electric cars, and SUVs.  Kelley Blue Book’s KBB.com ranked highest in its category for brand equity and was named Online Auto Shopping Brand of the Year by the 2012 Harris Poll EquiTrend® study.Kelley Blue Book Co. Inc. is a wholly owned subsidiary of AutoTrader.com.

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1. **\*The Sorento and Optima GDI (EX Trims and certain LX Trims only) and GDI Turbo are built in the United States from U.S. and globally sourced parts.**

   1 Source: Automotive Lease Guide Spring 2011 Perceived Quality Study. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. . Source: Experian Automotive Q2 2011 market analysis. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Based on 5-year cumulative growth between 12-month retail sales for periods ending June 2007 and June 2012 of all U.S. automotive brands. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)