

**For Immediate Release**  
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## **GREATER RALEIGH CONVENTION AND VISITORS BUREAU UNVEILS RED CARPET WELCOME PROGRAM**

**Raleigh, NC** – The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau (GRCVB) unveiled, today, a comprehensive communication program geared toward engaging Wake County businesses with convention and meeting attendees. The meeting was held at the Raleigh Marriott City Center and was attended by more than 170 members of the hospitality community.

The Red Carpet Welcome Program gives restaurants, hotels, retail vendors, transportation companies and other organizations which have a role in Wake County's 1.5 billion tourism industry, an opportunity to showcase products and services to the more than 163 events currently scheduled at the new Raleigh Convention Center, opening September 5, 2008.

“We want to position the Greater Raleigh area as one of the most hospitable destinations in the country,” said Denny Edwards, president and CEO of the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau. “By giving businesses the tools they need to effectively communicate with meeting planners and convention delegates, we can ensure that visitors to our destination arrive to a warm welcome and leave with the desire to return, not only for business but also for pleasure.”

Components of the Red Carpet Welcome Program include welcome banners and signage, table tents, ribbons for employees and door hangers; all of which are customizable for specific arriving groups. Also detailed in the communications plan is access to the official Convention Calendar; including detailed group resumes, as well as an opportunity for participation in a SmartCard, which offers discounts and promotions through a partnership with ZSpotlight. Participation in all programs is free to Wake County businesses.

“The Red Carpet Welcome Program has the potential to give visitors to our area a complete picture of what our destination has to offer,” said Julie Brakenbury, director of Convention Services for the GRCVB. “Delegates to meetings and conventions don't sit in meetings all day, they have the opportunity to explore our restaurants, museums and shopping areas, and we want to make that experience a positive one.”

The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau, as the official destination marketing organization to Raleigh and Wake County, accelerates sustainable economic growth and development by increasing visitor and convention business.