

Prepared by: Jayne Kirkpatrick, Director, Public Affairs Department

For more information: Roger Krupa, Director, Raleigh Convention Center, 831-6011

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RALEIGH WAS MADE FOR MEETINGS!

Today, after more than two centuries, Raleigh is finally realizing its primary mission. Raleigh was a town created for meetings.

Meeting here in a tavern in 1792, a nine-member commission created Raleigh as a place for our state legislators to meet. Willie Jones of Halifax, the leader of the commission, advocated for creating Raleigh as the new North Carolina capital. Foreseeing our City's mission, he built a manor house on the grounds where St. Augustine's College now stands and named it "Welcome Place."

Such was the creation of our City that we cherish 216 years later. The opening of the Raleigh Convention Center prepares the Capital City to fulfill its role as a premiere meeting destination of the 21st century.

Making Raleigh's downtown "happen" has been a labor of love over the past six years. Our investment in Fayetteville Street and our partnership with Wake County to build the 500,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art convention center and to assist with the Marriott City Center hotel have encouraged more than \$2.0 billion in private investment.

Businesses are eager to be part of downtown Raleigh. Progress Energy is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year in its sparkling downtown offices. The RBC Bank headquarters is opening at the corner of Martin and Fayetteville streets. Several mid-sized companies, including Capital Bank, Optimal Technologies and Headway Corporate Resources, have moved their headquarters downtown as well.

Residents are eager to be part of downtown Raleigh. More than 7,000 of us call it home. An additional 2,000 residential units are planned or under construction.

Government is eager to be part of downtown Raleigh. State government's Green Square will expand the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and relocate the offices of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The Wake County complex will bring 20 new courtrooms to Salisbury and Fayetteville streets. Our City is designing a new police and fire headquarters on the north side of Nash Square.

Property owners also are revitalizing historic structures as a key feature of our 21st century profile. Raleigh cherishes its heritage as seen by the renovation of the late 19th century Heilig-Levine building, the renovation of the early 1900s Raleigh Times building, and the façade renovations that are revealing the distinctive Victorian and Edwardian storefronts. The Blount Street redevelopment project is also restoring 25 historically elegant homes and creating 500 new residences.

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