

For Immediate Release
August 27, 2009

Contact: Ryan Smith
(919) 645-2676
rsmith@visitraleigh.com

CELEBRATE CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN GREATER RALEIGH THIS FALL *More than 10 Festivals Take Place Throughout North Carolina's Capital City*

Raleigh, NC – From saris to sombreros and baklava to biscotti, the Raleigh area celebrates the world's cultures with more than 10 community-wide festivals this fall. Consistently ranked as a top place to live, work and play by numerous national publications; the area lives up to that moniker by providing a sense of community and acceptance for a melting pot of cultures, religions and lifestyles. Discover many of the cultures which make this area a celebratory and dynamic place to be.

Festival season kicks off in historic Wake Forest with two festivals - **ItaliaFest, September 12**, a celebration of the area's Italian ancestry and **IrishFest, September 26**, featuring Irish singers, dancers, food, beer and of course, bagpipes.

Vacation over, but still on island-time? **The 1st Annual Caribbean Festival, September 19**, held at the Herbert C. Young Community Center in Cary, will have you dreaming of white sand beaches and calypso music. The same weekend, the Raleigh area goes Greek during the **28th Annual Greek Fest, September 18-20**, at the NC State Fairgrounds. One of the state's largest Greek gatherings, this popular festival showcases food, dancing, crafts and cultural traditions.

The United States celebrates Independence Day in July but in Mexico, the "Cry of Independence" is celebrated in September. The Raleigh area's Mexican community commemorates this historic moment during the annual **Mexican Independence Day Celebration, September 20**, at the NC State Fairgrounds. A traditional Mexican rodeo, authentic fiesta and many popular Hispanic bands round out the day.

The Raleigh area has an active Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender (GLBT) population and these communities come together during **NC PrideFest 2009, September 26**, in venues throughout Durham and Raleigh. In downtown Raleigh, festival-goers are encouraged to "Embrace the Night" with local performers and events at area bars and restaurants. In addition to PrideFest, the LGBT Center of Raleigh is holding a **"Coming Out" Party, October 17** in Moore Square, with food, free entertainment and the celebration of the state's GLBT community.

Having trouble deciding what cultural celebration to attend? Celebrate them all at the **24th Annual International Festival, October 2-4** held at the Raleigh Convention Center. The festival which boasts an attendance of more than 35,000 and celebrates 45 various

nationalities, is a weekend overload for the senses with food, music, traditional dance, arts bazaar and exhibitions.

Take in the seasonal fall temperatures at Cary's Koka Booth Amphitheatre for **Diwali Festival of Lights, October 10**. The theme of this year's festival is "Padharo Mhare Des" - Welcome to the Vibrant State of Rajasthan. Literally meaning "the land of royalty", Rajasthan is the largest and may be the most 'colorful' state of India. This full-day event of extravagant Indian performances will culminate with a performance from a well-known Indian artist and spectacular fireworks. The following day, **Eid - Festival of Feast**, marks the end of the fasting month of Ramadan. Over six million US Muslims celebrate Eid along with 1.2 billion people around the world in over 100 countries. This festival will feature a bazaar, food, music, arts and dance from all over the world.

It may be a celebration of foreign culture to some, but the **NC State Fair, October 15-25**, is a celebration of all things North Carolina. From food products native to North Carolina to livestock showcases, corn-on-a-stick and deep-fried anything; the largest event in the state gives visitors a glimpse into the simple pleasures that make our state a unique and dynamic place to visit.

For more information on any of these cultural festivals and other area attractions, or to book special packages and rates during the fall, go to www.visitRaleigh.com.

The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau, as the official destination marketing organization of Raleigh and Wake County, accelerates sustainable economic growth and development by increasing visitor and convention business. Through its website, www.visitRaleigh.com and other tools, the GRCVB assists local visitors in a variety of ways.