

For Immediate Release
September 2, 2011

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

**Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau Honors
Lifetime Achievement, Eure, Ross, Hunter and Horizon Award Winners
at Annual Luncheon**

Raleigh, N.C. – The Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau honored seven individuals with hospitality industry awards at its 24th Annual Luncheon held August 31, 2011 at the Raleigh Convention Center.

The award winners are:

Lifetime Achievement Award

John Brantley, Airport Director, Raleigh Durham International Airport

This recognition is given to an individual who has demonstrated lifelong support and leadership in Wake County tourism, promoted a standard of excellence and has made lasting contributions to the industry's growth as a whole. This is only the second time in the Bureau's 24 year history that this award has been given.

Brantley has led the Raleigh Durham International Airport from a mid-sized regional airport to a successful and thriving transportation center which welcomes more than 9.1 million travelers per year with flights stretching from coast to coast and an array of international destinations. Through Brantley's leadership RDU completed its long-range master plan resulting in the construction of the airport's 10,000 foot runway and the new Terminal 2 – a project he made sure was completed prior to thousands of fans and media arriving in our area for the NHL All-Star Game.

Brantley's dedication to Wake County as both a business and leisure destination, as well as his keen understanding that many travelers' first impression of our area is that of the airport demonstrates his long-term commitment to the growth and prosperity of Wake County.

Thad Eure, Jr. Memorial Award

The Carolina Hurricanes (Award accepted by Jim Rutherford)

The Thad Eure, Jr. Memorial Award is the Bureau's longest running and most prestigious award recognizing an individual or organization that has made a major impact on the Wake County hospitality industry. The award is named for the late restaurateur and community leader Thad Eure Jr.

The Carolina Hurricanes led the effort to bring and host the NHL All-Star Game and Weekend to the Raleigh area. As a result of this game changing weekend, the area welcomed 18,900 visitors from outside the Raleigh area, generated 10,551 hotel room nights and total attendance figures, including both local and out-of-town attendees, for the weekend's festivities was estimated to be 138,000. The weekend also garnered an unprecedented \$49 million in ad value of media exposure from more than 320 members of the press in attendance. The success of the weekend, led by the Carolina Hurricanes, shows that the Raleigh area can host multi-day large scale events and that it can be done with incredible results.

John B. Ross, Jr. Leadership Award

USA Baseball (Award accepted by Paul Seiler)

The John B. Ross Leadership Award was established in 1996 to recognize an outstanding executive management-level individual who displays exceptional leadership skills to positively impact the Wake County hospitality industry and community. The award is given in honor of John Ross, who was the GRCVB Chairman of the Board of Directors in 1995-96. The award exemplifies the courage, leadership, dedication and inspiration that Ross portrayed in the hospitality industry for more than 20 years.

USA Baseball was honored with this prestigious award for its leadership, in partnership with The Town of Cary, in helping create the National Training Complex – the finest facility of its kind and an economic catalyst in our community. This world-class facility brings thousands of fans and athletes to the area generating millions of dollars in direct visitor spending each year. Major events hosted at the facility include: USA Baseball Tournament of Stars, The National Team Identification Series and the Breakthrough Series.

USA Baseball is a true cornerstone in our sports tourism industry, and the organization's commitment to the community is a point of pride for the Town of Cary and all of Wake County.

Horizon Award

The Horizon Award recognizes exemplary attitude and professionalism of a mid-management level employee who demonstrates the skills to be a future leader in the hospitality industry.

Stephanie Watts, Director of Human Resources, at the Hilton North Raleigh Midtown.

Isaac Hunter Excellence in Service Awards

The Isaac Hunter Excellence in Service Awards honor front-line employees in the local hospitality industry who go above and beyond normal expectations to provide

outstanding service to visitors and residents. The 2011 winners were selected in the following categories:

Accommodations

Troy Kent, Concierge at the Raleigh Marriott Crabtree Valley

Dining

Allison B. Miller, Server and Head Wait Staff at The Irregardless Café & Catering

Attractions

Charity Van Horn, Event Host at Marbles Kids Museum

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

###