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

## **NHL All-Star Weekend a Huge Win for Raleigh Area**

*Area proves why hospitality and customer service are a winning combination*

**RALEIGH (February 3, 2011)** -- The NHL All-Star Weekend (Jan. 28-30) has come and gone, but the Raleigh area has proven that it was the undisputed MVP of a weekend that welcomed more than 130,000 fans and spectators, not to mention more than 320 members of national and international media, to North Carolina's Capital City.

Venues throughout Raleigh, including the Raleigh Convention Center (RCC), Raleigh Amphitheater, Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts, City Plaza and the RBC Center worked in perfect harmony to feature an "all-star" line-up of free and ticketed events. The Raleigh Convention Center was the epicenter of the weekend hosting NHL Fan Fair, a 150,000-square-foot hockey fan festival complete with interactive games and attractions, special appearances and dozens of other dynamic activities; while the adjacent Downtown Raleigh Amphitheater and City Plaza entertained thousands with free concerts, family-friendly entertainment, food and ice skating during NHL All-Star Wide Open.

"The Raleigh Convention Center has always been about great meetings AND even more," says RCC Director of Marketing Laurie Okun. "When customers come, we offer the possibility of expanded events into our dynamic downtown --from our new public square to our new amphitheater to the famed Progress Energy Center for the Performing Arts."

"It isn't just area venues that deserve credit for pulling off an event of this magnitude," said Denny Edwards, president and CEO of the Greater Raleigh Convention and Visitors Bureau. "The entire Wake County hospitality community, from transportation operators to our area's hotels, restaurants and numerous volunteers, approached this weekend with an enthusiasm that didn't go unnoticed."

**Here's a sample of the praise the Raleigh area received on hosting the NHL All-Star Weekend and Game.**

*"Broadcasters, players and fans hadn't even left Wake County before they began piling praise on the community's hospitality, with kind words for everything from the Fan Fair in the Raleigh Convention Center to the atmosphere on downtown streets and the boisterous crowds inside and out of the arena."*

**News & Observer**

*"The NHL All Star game wraps up a weekend of events that has proven Raleigh should no longer get unfairly labeled a "non-traditional" market. ... Overall, from a personal standpoint, this weekend has been a massive success."* **1040 Radio Tampa Bay**

*"I've been going to All-Star Games since 1990 and this is the best weekend I've ever attended. A big reason why - not just the players on both teams, not just the NHL and their great ideas, it is because the*

*people of North Carolina and the City of Raleigh and the great corporate communication they had all over.” **The Sports Network (TSN)***

*“Raleigh will go down as the biggest star of NHL’s All-Star Weekend - three weeks from now you likely will have not the faintest idea who played for the eponymous teams -- the clear winner was Raleigh.” **Sports Illustrated Online***

*“This All-Star Game was a great one. The game was great because of the genuinely friendly people here, and the first-class way the event has been presented by all involved. I know I sound like a member of the Raleigh Chamber of Commerce here, but it’s true: Raleigh is officially a real hockey town now in my book.” **Versus***

*“The city is a buzz of activity, and the NHL is front and center. There are All Star billboards and banners everywhere you turn, and the convention center looks impressive ... from the customs officer at the airport yesterday, to the shuttle bus driver, to the hotel’s check-in staff – everyone wants to talk hockey here! The city is excited and so is the NHL staff.” **ESPN America***

The Raleigh area has a commitment to sustainability, and hosting an event like the NHL All-Star Weekend proved that no matter the size of event, staying environmentally-friendly remains a priority and that it can be accomplished successfully.

As part of its multi-faceted sustainability initiative NHL Green, the National Hockey League partnered with the Carolina Hurricanes, the City of Raleigh, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Rock and Wrap It Up! and North Carolina State University to minimize the environmental impact from the various All-Star Weekend festivities. The RBC Center, site of the NHL All-Star Game, maintained its green recycling practices, at All-Star Wide Open sustainability booths were set up and unused concessions throughout various events during NHL All-Star Weekend were donated to the Inter-Faith Food Shuttle.

The Greater Raleigh Convention & 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.