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***NC Go! ASKS TRANSPORTATION EXPERTS THE TOUGH QUESTIONS
Coalition Holds Annual Meeting, Recognizes Transportation Champions***

GREENSBORO – The latest poll done by NC FREE in September shows that roads, highways and traffic are of less concern to North Carolinians. *NC Go!* today challenged experts to answer tough questions on transportation issues and their impact on North Carolina.

The panel discussion, “NC: *Are We Moving Ahead?*” was part of the organization’s Annual Meeting and Transportation Dinner held at the Grandover Resort and Conference Center.

The panel discussion – “NC: *Are We Moving Ahead?*” was part of *NC Go!*’s Annual Meeting and Transportation Dinner. Jack Betts, Associate Editor of *The Charlotte Observer*, served as moderator. The discussion tackled such hot button issues as total project lettings, expectations of the project delivery study and next steps, effectiveness of intergovernmental cooperation, the Highway Trust Fund, public transit and thoughts on the lawsuit.

Panelists included Representative Connie Wilson, Representative Nelson Cole, Greensboro City Councilwoman Sandy Carmany, Wake County Commissioner Joe Bryan, Betsy Bailey, Executive Director, North Carolina Public Transportation Association (NCPTA); Graham Moore, APAC, Carolina, Inc. and Gray Kimel, Vice President/General Manager Vulcan Materials and President of the NC Aggregates Association.

“There is a substantial link between transportation and growth,” said Bill Carstarphen, Co-Chair of *NC Go!*. “Poor planning now will not only threaten our quality of life, but also our ability to compete economically. It takes multi-modal solutions. It takes effective planning. That is what we want to draw attention to today.”

In addition to the panel discussion, *NC Go!* recognized Congressman David Price, NC Speakers of the House Jim Black and Richard Morgan and Greensboro City Councilwoman Sandy Carmany, for their contributions to transportation in North Carolina – naming them *NC Go!*’s 2003 “Champions of Transportation.”

Congressman David Price sits on the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriation Committee and has been instrumental in securing funding for the Triangle Transit Authority’s fixed guideway project, pursuing improvements at railroad grade crossings along the proposed high speed rail corridor and support for statewide bus projects. Congressman Price has taken the lead in Washington on many transportation fronts, including his efforts to secure federal appropriations for public transportation needs statewide.

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Congressman Price has worked to connect Orange, Durham and Wake Counties with regional rail service by securing over \$50 million for the initial planning and construction of the much-needed system. He has worked to secure a \$9 million earmark in Fiscal Year 03 for the Phase 1 Regional Rail Transit System. He also fought for expedited construction and expansion of US 1, US 64, NC 55 and the Raleigh Outer Loop.

Additionally, Representative Price continues to work to ensure North Carolina gets the transportation funding support that is needed to expand the development of mobility options for North Carolinians during reauthorization of the Federal Surface Transportation Program. This year, Congressman Price was appointed to the Appropriations subcommittee on Homeland Security where he plays an important role in protecting our critical infrastructure.

Both Speaker Richard Morgan and Speaker Jim Black worked together this year and encouraged their colleagues to reach across the aisle to build coalitions so the NC Moving Ahead proposal could be considered. Because of both Speakers' commitment to transportation, they appointed a conference committee committed to passing NC Moving Ahead, which allows \$700 million to be spent on road improvements and public transportation across the state.

As a result of their combined efforts, the NC Moving Ahead legislation passed. The bill has had a real impact, not just on transportation, but also on the economic viability of the transportation industry.

Greensboro Councilwoman Sandy Carmany is in her twelfth year of service on the Greensboro City Council. She has been a member of the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) Board of Trustees since the inaugural meeting in 1998 and has served as chair for the past three years.

Councilwoman Carmany is the chair of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) for the City of Greensboro. Her focus for many years has been road construction and mass transit. She feels it is important to plan and implement strategies to keep traffic flowing smoothly and to reduce vehicle emissions.

“Our award recipients are dedicated to improving the state of transportation in North Carolina,” said Larry Goode, Co-Chair of *NC Go!*. “As an organization dedicated to transportation issues, *NC Go!* believes it is necessary to recognize these true Champions of Transportation.”

NC Go! was launched in 2001 with fewer than 10 members. Today, the coalition has more than 100 members representing over 22,000 businesses and organizations and 1 million individuals across the state.

Since its inception, the organization has worked to protect dedicated Trust Fund money, expand Highway Trust Fund Flexibility, maintain efficient cash management practices, terminate annual transfers from the Highway Trust Fund to the General Fund and increase multi-modal transportation funding.

NC Go! also has been instrumental in the passage of several pieces of legislation, the latest, NC Moving Ahead – branded by some at the General Assembly as the “*NC Go!* Bill.” In addition to Moving Ahead, *NC Go!* called for a TIP Project Delivery Study this year, citing “effective business practices” as a means to enable timely delivery of transportation projects.