

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 23, 2004

NC TEENS STAR IN NEW COMMERCIALS PROMOTING TOBACCO PREVENTION AND MTV PRIZE PACKAGE

(Raleigh, NC) – Forget “American Idol,” teens across North Carolina are becoming hometown celebrities by starring in a new series of television spots sponsored by Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered. (TRU), the state’s teen tobacco prevention and cessation campaign. One of the spots promotes a contest offering all North Carolina teens the chance to win a trip to one of the coolest events in pop culture, the MTV Video Music Awards.

Two types of new TRU television spots are currently running or about to start:

- 1.) Teens are appearing in ads promoting the TRU Road Trip, a traveling exhibit that aims to educate young people about the dangers of tobacco use. The TRU Road Trip spots are running or will run in the following markets to promote upcoming events: **Fayetteville** (July 12-23), **Wilmington** (July 19-30), and **Hickory** (Aug. 16-27).
- 2.) Starting July 26 and running through August 8, teens will appear in spots that will be aired statewide, promoting a contest to win a trip to the **MTV Video Music Awards** on Aug. 29 in Miami. Five lucky North Carolinians will take home the contest’s second prize - MTV Digital Stereo Systems and a selection of CDs.

Both spots will run on cable networks chosen because of their significant teen audiences: **BET, Cartoon Network, CMT, Comedy Central, E! Entertainment, ESPN2, FX, MTV, Nickelodeon, Sci-Fi Channel** and **Spike**. The networks are also providing prizes to be distributed at TRU Road Trip stops (see schedule below).

“The message is what’s most important, and our message to young people is very clear- Do not smoke and if you are already smoking, quit,” said Alison McLaurin, director of marketing and public affairs at the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund, which sponsors the TRU campaign. “At the same time, to really resonate with young people, TRU has to be in tune with their interests. We’re making appropriate pop culture connections to help us spread the tobacco prevention message as widely as possible.”

The young people featured in the new TRU spots may be contacted through the following local teen tobacco prevention programs:

- Question Y Central (Triangle Area), Bronwyn Lucas, 919-683-3088
- TRU Group of Orange County, Matt Streng, 919-245-2424
- Teens Against Consuming Tobacco, (Durham), April Watlington, 919-560-7832
- Union County Public Schools, Kim Bayha, 704-296-4821
- Hertford-Gates Health Agency, Bill Burgess, 252-332-6654

ABOUT THE TRU ROAD TRIP

This summer, the TRU Road Trip is traveling to seven cities and towns in North Carolina, taking with it exhibits on the dangers of tobacco use, information on TRU programs, prizes and a TV crew to gather footage of teen testimonials for a new round of television spots to launch in the fall.

“The dangers of tobacco use are impossible to ignore,” said Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue, HWTF chairperson, during a June press conference in Raleigh announcing the TRU Road Trip. “We need to get tobacco products out of our children’s reach and out of our schools.” Lt. Gov. Perdue noted that when the first TRU TV campaign launched in April, visits to the campaign’s Web site, www.realityunfiltered.com, shot up 140 percent from the site’s previous high mark and that traffic has remained higher in 2004 than in 2003. “Teens are definitely interested,” Lt. Gov. Perdue said. “Now is the time to act.”

The TRU Road Trip’s schedule as it continues to trek through North Carolina is as follows (with upcoming dates in bold):

- Raleigh (June 24, 9:30-10:30 a.m. at the NC General Assembly)
- Winston-Salem (June 25, 2 to 5 p.m. at the State Games TRU Block Party in the parking lot of the Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum)
- Kinston (July 9, 5:30-8 p.m., Grainger Stadium, Kinston Indians baseball game)
- Durham (July 17, 3-6 p.m., American Tobacco Historic District)
- **Fayetteville (July 24, 1-4 p.m., Cross Creek Mall)**
- **Wilmington (July 30, Time TBD, Legion Stadium, Wilmington Sharks baseball game)**
- **Hickory (August 27, 5:30 - 8 p.m., L.P. Frans Stadium, Hickory Crawdads baseball game)**

ABOUT THE NC HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRUST FUND

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund makes North Carolina stronger, both physically and economically, by funding programs that promote preventive health. Created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of North Carolina's share of the national tobacco settlement, HWTF has invested \$55 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program. For more information, please visit www.hwtfc.org.