

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NEWS ADVISORY
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TOBACCO PREVENTION EVENT OFFERS HICKORY TEENS THE CHANCE TO BE “BUTT-KICKING” TV STARS

TRU ROAD TRIP TEAMS WITH HICKORY CRAWDADS FOR TV SHOOT ON AUGUST 27

(Hickory, NC) – Hickory-area teens will have a chance to star in a new series of teen tobacco use prevention television spots when the TRU (Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered.) Road Trip comes to town on Friday, August 27, from 5:30 to 8 p.m. in the parking lot just outside the L.P. Frans Stadium gates.

TRU, the state’s teen tobacco prevention initiative funded by the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), is teaming up with the Hickory Crawdads and western North Carolina health advocates to host a night free of secondhand smoke and spit tobacco. This event will also include prizes, messages promoting good health and even an opportunity to become a TV star.

The TRU Road Trip will conclude its successful summer tour with a final stop this week in Hickory. The Road Trip traveled to seven North Carolina cities and towns this summer, carrying with it thought-provoking exhibits on the dangers of tobacco use and a television crew gathering teen testimonials for new television spots that will air statewide in the fall. Visitors will also have a chance to win prizes, including cool clothes and tickets to Carolina Hurricanes games and the TJ Maxx 2004 Tour of Gymnastics Champions.

Teens from Caldwell, Catawba, Burke, Gaston, Iredell and Mecklenburg counties are scheduled to join Hickory-area youths at the baseball game and TRU Road Trip festivities.

TRU Road Trip and Hickory Crowdads/Page 2

Participating groups include:

- Healthy Caldwellians, Inc.
- Survivors and Victims of Tobacco Empowerment (S.A.V.E.)
- NC Spit Tobacco Education Program (STEP)
- Catawba County Public Health Department

The TRU Road Trip will also distribute materials encouraging the adoption of 100% Tobacco Free School (TFS) policies, which prohibit smoking anytime, anywhere on public school grounds. In the Hickory area, Catawba and Caldwell counties have a 100% TFS policy.

“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.”

Hickory is the remaining stop on the TRU Road Trip’s schedule:

- Raleigh (June 24, 9 - 10 a.m. at Halifax Mall)
- Winston-Salem (June 25, 2 - 7 p.m. at the State Games TRU Block Party in the Fairgrounds area of the Lawrence Joel Veterans Memorial Coliseum)
- Kinston (July 9, 5:30 - 8 p.m. outside Grainger Stadium, Kinston Indians baseball game)
- Durham (July 17, 3 - 6 p.m. at the American Tobacco Historic District)
- Fayetteville (July 24, 1 - 4 p.m. at Cross Creek Mall)
- Wilmington (July 30, 5:30 - 8 p.m., outside Legion Stadium, Wilmington Sharks baseball game)
- **Hickory (August 27, 5:30 - 8 p.m., L.P. Frans Stadium, Hickory Crowdads 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 seniors. For more information, please visit www.hwtfc.org.

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