



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Three N.C. Municipalities Awarded “Fit Community” Designation** *Communities recognized for promoting healthy lifestyles*

**RALEIGH, N.C.** – Three North Carolina municipalities were awarded the Fit Community designation today to recognize their success in promoting healthier lifestyles among their residents.

The Town of Black Mountain, Town of Tarboro and City of Jacksonville were all recognized for supporting healthy eating, physical activity and tobacco-free living through policy and community infrastructure.

The Fit Community designations were made by Fit Together, the statewide initiative of Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) and the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) to combat obesity and excessive weight. Lt. Gov. Bev Perdue, chair of the HWTF, and Bob Greczyn, president and CEO of BCBSNC, presented the third annual awards.

“By promoting healthy living, these communities are making a real difference,” said Lt. Gov. Perdue. “These Fit Communities are improving the well-being of their residents and helping lead the way to a healthier North Carolina.”

Mayors, city officials and local representatives from across the state accepted this honor on behalf of their communities, including Black Mountain Mayor Carl Bartlett and Tarboro Mayor Donald Morris. Jacksonville Recreation Program Supervisor Victoria Lukasina accepted the award on behalf of Jacksonville Mayor Sammy Phillips.

This year’s event also provided three past winners the opportunity to give an update on their successes in continuing to improve the health of residents in their communities. Cramerton Mayor Pro Tempore Ronnie Worley, Durham Mayor Bill Bell and Pitt County Commissioner Jimmy Garris spoke on behalf of their communities. Cramerton and Durham were both 2006 designees and Pitt County was a 2007 designee.

“Healthy lifestyles are related to the environments in which we work, live and play,” said Greczyn. “It’s a lot easier to get fit when you have access to biking trails, sidewalks for walking and smoke-free living right in your backyard. We applaud these communities for making that commitment.”

All North Carolina municipalities and counties were eligible for the Fit Community designation. Applications were judged based upon objective criteria collected from peer-reviewed studies and national programs. The selection process was managed by Chapel Hill’s Active Living by Design, a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

Communities chosen for the Fit Community designations receive highway signs to place on their roadways; plaques; recognition on the Fit Community Web site, [www.FitCommunityNC.org](http://www.FitCommunityNC.org); and use of the Fit Community logo.

Obesity is a major threat to children and adults across the United States, especially here in North Carolina. According to the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 61 percent of North Carolina adults are overweight or obese, and 25 percent reported no exercise in the prior 30 days. Fit Together’s mission is to support programs and initiatives that address this growing problem.

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### **About NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund**

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund was created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of North Carolina's share of the national tobacco settlement. HWTF has invested \$143 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$102 million to fund prescription drug assistance programs. For more information, please visit [www.HealthWellNC.com](http://www.HealthWellNC.com).

### **About Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina**

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is a leader in delivering innovative health care products, services and information to more than 3.7 million members, including approximately 904,000 served on behalf of other Blue Plans. For 75 years, the company has served its customers by offering health insurance at a competitive price and has served the people of North Carolina through support of community organizations, programs and events that promote good health. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina is an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association. Access BCBSNC online at [www.bcbsnc.com](http://www.bcbsnc.com).

### **About Active Living by Design**

Active Living by Design is a national program of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, established to create, enhance and promote environments that make it safe and convenient for people to be more physically active. The goal of Active Living by Design is to encourage changes in design, transportation and policies to cultivate and support active living. The \$15.5-million program is based at the School of Public Health at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. For more information, please visit [www.activelivingbydesign.org](http://www.activelivingbydesign.org).

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To download a photograph of local officials receiving their awards, please visit [www.FitCommunityNC.org](http://www.FitCommunityNC.org) after 2 p.m. today.