FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Wilmington Chamber InterCity Visit to Richmond Provides Insights Into Economic Development and Regional Collaboration

Wilmington, NC—28 area business leaders and elected officials have returned from a two-day InterCity Leadership Visit to Richmond, VA, organized by the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce, with numerous takeaways on how Richmond has encouraged economic development, creativity and innovation, while bolstering quality of place amenities and increasing tourism. The Wilmington Chamber organized the trip to introduce the local delegation to innovative ideas, programs and initiatives which may be adapted and implemented in our community, as well as build relationships among our delegation attendees, resulting in a more cohesive team working on behalf of our community.

The trip took place September 26-27, and focused on four main areas: regional collaboration, marketing/promotion, urban living, and development. Presentations featuring Richmond civic leaders and area planners addressed topics such as community branding, biotechnology, bus rapid transit, the riverfront masterplan, and creativity and innovation.

"The InterCity Leadership Visit to Richmond was an opportunity for our area leaders and stakeholders to learn firsthand from a community that has rebounded by reinventing and rebranding itself from a traditional, historic community into a thriving center for innovation and the arts," said Chamber Chairman Mitch Lamm. "We learned a great deal about how the mix of regional collaboration, branding, and economic development go hand-in-hand to create a community where entrepreneurs and millennials want to locate, while preserving their tie to a rich, historic past."

A few of the broad takeaways from the presentations and bus tour of Richmond included (not in a ranked order):

• broad-based, all-inclusive collaboration pays big dividends, especially linking economic development and quality of life issues;
• the importance of embracing diversity and focusing on inclusion;
• the placement of a tech center downtown creates synergy;
• if a city can attract skilled workers, employers will follow;

• the need for both collaboration and branding to have the most effective business recruitment strategy;
• the importance of the arts to drive growth and vibrancy downtown and throughout the community; and
• the value of a Municipal Service District for downtown that is able to respond faster and take on more projects and issues than local government.

Guest speakers from Richmond that made presentations included:

- Mark Kronenthal, Senior Policy Advisor, Mayor's Office
- Kim Scheeler, President and CEO, ChamberRVA
- Lucy Meade, Director, Marketing & Development, Venture Richmond
- Ashley Hall, Manager, Capital Region Collaborative
- Lee Downey, Director of Economic & Community Development, City of Richmond
- Carrie Rose Pace, Director of Communications, Greater Richmond Transit Company
- Mark Olinger, Director of Planning & Development Review, City of Richmond
- Bill Martin, Director, The Valentine
- Carrie Roth, President/CEO, Virginia Biotechnology Research Park
- Chrystal Neal, Senior VP, Strategy & Brand, ChamberRVA
- Micah White, Founder, RVA Has Talent

Attendees for the InterCity Leadership Visit from Wilmington included:
- Neal Andrew, President, Andrew Consulting Engineers
- Jonathan Barfield, Vice Chair, New Hanover County Commission
- Sterling Cheatham, City Manager, City of Wilmington
- Scott Czechlewski, Communications Director, Wilmington Chamber
- Diane Durance, Director, UNCW CIE
- Margaret Haynes, Mayor Pro-tem, City of Wilmington
- Kim Hufham, President & CEO, Wilmington & Beaches CVB
- Jim Hundley, Vice President, Thomas Construction Group
- Randall Johnson, Executive Director, NC Biotechnology Center Southeast
- Frank Jones, Chairman, Tourism Development Authority
- Livian Jones, VP Operations, Newland Communities
- Hal Kitchin, Cape Fear Future Chairman/Partner, McGuireWoods LLP
- Mitch Lamm, Chamber Chairman/VP, First Citizens Bank
- Paul Lawler, Council Member, City of Wilmington
- Amanda Lee, President, Cape Fear Community College
- Charlie Mattox, Chamber First Vice Chair/Market President, BB&T

- Tyler Newman, President & CEO, BASE
- Kevin O'Grady, Council Member, City of Wilmington
- Chris O'Keefe, Planning & Inspections Director, New Hanover County
- Ernie Olds, VP/Principal, Becker Morgan Group
- Bill Saffo, Mayor, City of Wilmington
- Scott Satterfield, CEO, Wilmington Business Development
- Ruth Smith, Chief Communications Officer, New Hanover County
- Jason Wheeler, President, Pathfinder Wealth Consulting
- Julie Wilsey, Director, Wilmington International Airport
- Ed Wolverton, President & CEO, Wilmington Downtown, Inc.
- Rob Zapple, Commissioner, New Hanover County

About the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce
The Wilmington Chamber of Commerce is the largest membership-based business association in Southeastern North Carolina. The Chamber's mission is to ensure economic prosperity throughout our region. This is accomplished by: creating a diverse, inclusive organization that serves as a strong voice for businesses in the Greater Wilmington area; offering unique membership benefits, services and education; and challenging government officials to address long term community and business interests.

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