

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### ***North Carolina Pride Parade Set for Sept. 20***

DURHAM, NC, February 23, 2003 -- The NC Pride Organization has announced that its 2003 NC Gay Pride Parade will take place in Durham, N.C. on Saturday, September 20. The parade is the signature event in a weekend's worth of activities, seminars, parties, and club activities in the area, including Pride NightFest in Raleigh.

Some 6,000 lesbian, gay, transgendered, bisexual and straight people participated in 2002 NC Pride weekend, a robust number in a state where crimes against nature statutes remain entrenched on the books and where employment non-discrimination is virtually non-existent outside of a few progressive municipalities and organizations. Pride organizers read the relatively strong and growing popularity of the parade as a sign of progress -- and a plain-old endorsement of fun and community spirit.

"We've hit on a winning formula here in North Carolina," says NC Pride spokesperson Keith Hayes. "The late September date turns the parade, the NightFest and all the other related events in the area into the last, large-scale summertime event in the Carolinas for the LGBT community. And given that it's an unusual month for a Pride Parade, we're having a lot of success in attracting entertainment, marching groups and participants from across the Carolinas and from way beyond state borders.

"We don't have the huge scale of the major urban parades, and a lot of people find that attractive," says Hayes. It's big without being overwhelming. It's fun without being hyper. And every year, most of us come away with the feeling that we've come out a little bit more as a minority community in a pretty conservative state -- and that, in the liberal pockets of North Carolina, we're a respected and appreciated part of the culture." Details about parade participants will be announced over the next months, as they are available.

Sponsors and partners for the NC Pride Parade include national companies like the Showtime network, U.S. Airways, AdamMale, Out America, Curve magazine, ID Lubricants and WholeFoods, and local organizations such as Raleigh's premier nightclubs Legends, Capital Corral, Flex Club, and White Rabbit Books, The Independent newspaper, and the statewide bi-monthly LGBT newspapers Q-Notes and The Front Page.

The N.C. Pride Organization is a 501(C)3 organization and is committed to working with the diverse LGBT community to promote unity among gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered people and to promote a positive image of our community in North Carolina and beyond.