



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Contact: Les Atkins 252-532-0073

Final Preparations Underway for Carolina Crossroads/CMN Hot Air Balloon Festival

Two-day event to feature live entertainment and special appearance by comedian Jeff Foxworthy

Roanoke Rapids, NC (May 14, 2008) - Final preparations are underway for the first Children's Miracle Network/Carolina Crossroads Hot Air Balloon Festival, May 16-17, at the Carolina Crossroads Outdoor Amphitheater. More than a dozen pilots from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Missouri are planning to attend the two-day event where they will compete in balloon races and skill competitions.

The balloons will lift off Friday morning at 6 a.m. (weather permitting) as part of a media flight event. Friday evening, the balloons will surround the outdoor amphitheater for a balloon glow at dusk. Saturday's balloon events begin at 6 a.m. with pilot competitions and a mass ascension is scheduled for 6 p.m. "There will be numerous opportunities to see the balloons this weekend. We are hoping the weather will cooperate. This event exemplifies our goal at Carolina Crossroads to be a family-oriented venue so be sure to bring your camera and capture life-long memories," said Elizabeth Branham, Carolina Crossroads Entertainment Director.

A full-slate of entertainment will also take place over the weekend. Visitors can enjoy carnival-type games, food, and a variety of musical entertainment, including musical performances by country stars Danielle Peck, the Zac Brown Band, and Kyle Wyley. Saturday evening will also feature a special appearance by comedian Jeff Foxworthy. Gates open Friday at 4:30 p.m. and Saturday at noon.

The Carolina Crossroads Hot Air Balloon Festival, presented by EMBARQ, also marks the 20th anniversary kick-off of Log a Load for Kids. This program has raised approximately \$29 million nationally to help sick and injured children. Log a Load for Kids was established by the South Carolina Forestry Association in 1988. The program began when loggers and others in the timber industry donated revenue from a load of logs to a nearby Children's Miracle Network affiliated hospital. Log a Load for Kids is one of CMN's largest sponsors. Funds raised through this program have improved the quality of care available to children and have been life saving in many cases.

A portion of the proceeds from this weekend's events benefit the Children's Miracle Network and its affiliated hospitals: University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina's Children's Hospital in Greenville and Duke Children's Hospital and Health Center in Durham.

Tickets for the Hot Air Balloon Festival are available at the Carolina Crossroads box office in Roanoke Rapids and online at www.carolinacrossroads.com.

About Carolina Crossroads: Carolina Crossroads is located off Interstate 95 in Roanoke Rapids, NC (Exit 171). The entertainment, tourism, and retail destination located between Richmond, VA, and Raleigh, NC, will offer live performance theatres, shops, hotels, convention and conference facilities, recreation and amusements, and numerous dining options. The Roanoke Rapids Theatre, which opened in July 2007, anchors the Carolina Crossroads Music Theatre and Entertainment District and features a live musical variety show weekly and nationally known country, pop, beach, and gospel music acts. For more information, visit www.carolinacrossroads.com.