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ATTENTION ASSIGNMENT EDITORS AND NEWS REPORTERS

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Institute for Sustainable Development Partners with Five N.C. Research Triangle Chambers of Commerce to help small businesses become sustainable

Five North Carolina Research Triangle area chambers of commerce announced formal partnerships today with the *Institute for Sustainable Development* to offer *Green Plus*, a program providing affordable sustainability expertise to small businesses and non-profit agencies. The **Cary, Chapel Hill-Carrboro, Durham, Morrisville** and **Raleigh** chambers of commerce will offer the Institute's *Green Plus* program at a discount to their members. **(More information about *Green Plus* can be found at www.gogreenplus.org.)**

“We are very pleased to partner with these outstanding chambers of commerce to offer their small business members affordable, practical triple bottom line sustainability expertise,” said Anne McKune, Director of the Institute. McKune continued, “We believe this academic – business partnership between Duke University, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and chambers of commerce is a model that can make green and sustainable practices more accessible to Main Street businesses across the country.”

Green Plus connects small employers with online assessment tools, and advice from Duke University and UNC Chapel Hill graduate students in the business, environment, public policy and social work



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fields. Exceptional sustainability efforts by an organization can result in *Green Plus Certification* – a recognition program businesses can use to convey their efforts to their customers and communities.

The Institute for Sustainable Development is an initiative of universities, chambers of commerce, businesses and philanthropic foundations to advance practical knowledge in sustainability. Institute partners include the Duke Center for International Development, the UNC Center for Global Initiatives, the UNC School of Social Work, the Chapel Hill - Carrboro Chamber of Commerce, the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce, GlaxoSmithKline, Lenovo, the Fenwick Foundation and the Foundation for a Sustainable Community.

With its university and business partners, the Institute developed *Green Plus* to help educate, motivate and reward small employers for pursuing greater triple bottom line sustainability. The Institute defines a sustainable enterprise as an organization that follows best practices in management as well as being a good steward both of its environment and its community.

First Certified Green Plus Business and Green Plus Movers Recognized

The Institute recognized the *Chapel Hill Restaurant Group* as the first *Certified Green Plus* business and eight other businesses and non-profits as *Green Plus Movers*. *Green Plus Movers* are organizations that have completed the first stage of *Green Plus Certification* and are working with the Institute's staff and academic partners to develop their own plans for saving money while becoming more green and sustainable.

Chris Carmody, Director of the Sustainable Business Initiative for the Institute, said, "The Chapel Hill Restaurant Group has been a pioneer in demonstrating the business case for sustainability -- saving and making money while going green and sustainable." "They provide an incredible number of practical examples any small employer could use to be a better environmental and community steward and be more successful in the process," Carmody concluded.

The Chapel Hill Restaurant Group owns five Triangle restaurants including *Spanky's*, *Squid's*, *411 West*, *518 West*, and *Mez*. *Mez*, located in the Research Triangle Park, is the first LEED certified restaurant in North Carolina. The Chapel Hill Restaurant Group has reduced its solid waste by 60% in the last ten years through extensive recycling, composting, and collecting all used cooking oils for use as bio fuels. Owners of the Chapel Hill Restaurant Group have been leaders in the purchase of



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local food for over 25 years, and estimate that their LEED certified Mez restaurant is using 40% less energy and 60% less water than their older, comparably sized restaurants.

Eight other businesses and agencies were recognized as *Green Plus Movers* – organizations that have successfully completed the first phase of *Green Plus* certification. These organizations include

- A Better Image Printing
- Carmine's
- Chapel Hill/Carrboro City Schools
- The Chapel Hill – Carrboro YMCA
- The Orange County Alcohol Beverage Control Board
- The PTA Thrift Shop
- The Redwoods Group
- Zemo Trevathan & Associates

Chamber Executives and Board Members Discuss the *Green Plus* Partnership

Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce

“As a business leader and chamber member, I feel it is very important for us all to do our part in continuing to help our business community and environment by participating in the *Green Plus* program. It is our duty to protect our environment now and in the future for the generations to come.” - *Jody Hatley, Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce Membership Services Chair; President & CEO, Excel Moving & Storage, Inc. – Allied Van Lines*

Cary Chamber of Commerce

“The Cary Chamber of Commerce is pleased to endorse a program that embraces the growing need for sustainability. Small businesses will benefit greatly from this added opportunity given to our members. We have recognized the need for opportunities like this and have set the chamber focus on sustainability for the upcoming year. We look forward to working closely with Green Plus and exploring the many wonderful opportunities it has to offer.” - *Howard S. Johnson, President, Cary Chamber of Commerce*



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Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce

“We are pleased to bring tested, affordable triple-bottom line sustainability tools and university expertise to small employers throughout the area. With *Green Plus*, Triangle businesses have a new program to help them make and save money by becoming more green and sustainable.”

-Aaron Nelson, *President & CEO of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce*

Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce

“*Green Plus* is the first real tangible product that a small business owner can put their arms around to understand the concept of sustainability as not only a good thing to do for our environment, but as a good thing to do for the bottom line of my business. It talks in simplistic language and offers easy and accessible resources to help the business work towards “green” as a way of doing business and a way to market their business.” - Casey Steinbacher, *President and CEO, Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce*

Morrisville Chamber of Commerce

“The Morrisville Chamber is extremely excited to partner with the Institute for Sustainable Development to offer *Green Plus*. We believe that members will have an immediate benefit because the tool enables companies not only to learn how to become more “green,” but the certification process also provides them an ability to measure their sustainability as an organization. The tool measures everything from your “green” practices to your succession planning. *Green Plus* will help companies remain viable and become more competitive.” – Sharon Rosche, *President, Morrisville Chamber of Commerce*

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