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### **Chamber President and CEO Harvey Schmitt Announces Retirement**

RALEIGH— Harvey Schmitt, president and CEO of the Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce, announced today that he will retire March 31, 2015 or as soon as his successor is named.

This morning, Schmitt, 65, told the Chamber's Executive Committee that January 2015 will mark 21 years as president and CEO of the Greater Raleigh Chamber and 43 years as a chamber professional.

"I have a passion for this community and Chamber and have invested every ounce of energy I could to support the improvement and growth of Raleigh/Wake County and the Research Triangle Region. But after four plus decades of nonstop action and reaching a number of longevity milestones, I am ready for a new challenge in my career and more time for family and grandchildren."

Board Chair Ed Willingham of First Citizens Bank said, "Harvey Schmitt has been a tireless advocate for improving the community's economy and quality of life. His fingerprints can be found on almost every major community initiative over the past 20 years. Harvey is someone who constantly brings people together to make things happen. He's always in the middle of what's happening but doesn't try to be the center of attention. He's someone who gives honest and unbiased feedback, sharing what you need to hear even if it's not necessarily what you want to hear."

Immediate Past Chair Richard Urquhart of Investors Management Corporation said, "Harvey has done a great job of engaging both business newcomers and old-timers in guiding the development of the region. My father led the Chamber in 1977, but my predecessor as Chamber chair was Jim Captain of Credit Suisse, a company that has been in the region for less than a decade. Harvey is always looking for ways to rally a very dynamic business community to move the community forward."

"Harvey's accomplishments during his years at the Chamber leave a legacy that will last," said chair-elect of the Board, Jill Heath of Mulkey Engineers & Consultants. "He is the consummate collaborator and professional leader. He has helped to build and sustain a culture of public/private and regional partnerships that are the envy of many communities across the nation."

Schmitt said it has been a great ride. "I have been able to be a part of the emergence of Raleigh as one of the best places to live and do business in America. The many rankings we receive don't happen by accident. They happen because there is a big team of community leaders and advocates working to make sure we stay on top. I've had a great group of business leaders to work with over these 21 years and each one of them gave great service to the Chamber and this community and I am indebted to them."

Throughout the past two decades, Schmitt has been actively promoting the growth of Raleigh and Wake County. "When I first came to Raleigh," he said, "I had the pleasure of being a part of the effort to get PNC Arena built and attracting the Carolina Hurricanes to the market. These two very important projects moved our region to a higher level," said Schmitt.

During Schmitt's tenure, the Chamber has played a role in building the market by:

- Establishing and funding five consecutive five-year strategic economic and community development programs under the banner Competitive Edge. These initiatives have generated billions of dollars in economic growth since their inception in 1995.
- Creating the Downtown Raleigh Alliance, the agency that has been a catalyst to much of downtown's renaissance
- Recruiting Red Hat and RBC (now PNC) to downtown Raleigh
- Building the Raleigh Convention Center
- Creating the Regional Transportation Alliance to advocate for transportation investments to coincide with the market's growth. Schmitt noted that "we are one of the fastest growing markets but we are also one of the least congested. RTA's attention to mobility has been critical in preserving our vaunted quality of life."
- Constructing the Triangle Expressway, the first modern toll road in North Carolina and the largest road construction project in the state's history.
- Passing over \$3 billion of school construction bonds including major bond campaigns in 2006 and 2013

Schmitt cited the Chamber's partnerships with government and other organizations, saying "I've also enjoyed great relationships with our city and county managers and school superintendents, most recently with Ruffin Hall, City of Raleigh; Jim Hartmann, Wake County; and Wake County Public Schools Superintendent, Dr. Jim Merrill. I've also had excellent economic development partners: Denny Edwards of the Convention and Visitors Bureau, David Diaz of the Downtown Raleigh Alliance, Roger Krupa of the Raleigh Convention Center, Charles Hayes of the Research Triangle Regional Partnership, Aaron Nelson of the Chapel Hill-Carrboro Chamber of Commerce, Casey Steinbacher of the Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce, Howard Johnson of the Cary Chamber of Commerce, Bob Geolas of Research Triangle Foundation, and all of the Chamber executives in Wake County. It truly is a great team."

Jill Heath, chair-elect, will lead a committee to conduct a nationwide search for Schmitt's successor. Members of the search committee will be named and begin work in the next two weeks.

Regarding his future plans, Schmitt said, “My wife, Pam, and I have made Raleigh our home so we are not leaving the community. While I do not intend to retire from work, I do plan to take some time to recharge my batteries and look forward to the opportunities ahead.”

### **About the Greater Raleigh Chamber**

The Greater Raleigh Chamber of Commerce is the Triangle's largest nonprofit business membership organization made up of more than 2,300 member firms representing two-thirds of the private sector employment in Wake County. The Chamber has represented the interests of the local business community since 1888.