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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Carolina BalloonFest Weekend Takes Flight October 21

Statesville, NC (8/15/2016) - The 43rd Annual Carolina BalloonFest takes flight October 21-23, 2016 near the Statesville Regional Airport where over 50 breath-taking hot air balloons and 3 special shapes will launch to decorate the skies of Iredell County. The traditional Balloon Glow will light up Saturday evening to thrill festival guests.

Hot Air Balloon Flights are scheduled twice daily; early morning & late afternoon. Between scheduled flights, many attractions and family-friendly activities are scheduled to enjoy 3 days of lofty, magical fun! *New this year;* youth art lessons at Kids Art Rally on Saturday, The Scrap Exchange on Sunday, Science Demonstrations presented by the Morehead Planetarium and Science Center and Black Powder Coffee seminars.

Hot air balloon rides may be purchased direct with participating pilots in advance or throughout the weekend while available. Tethered balloon rides on site offer an abbreviated sensation of flight for children and adults.

As a premier event in Statesville, roads to Carolina BalloonFest traditionally experience heavy traffic on Saturday & Sunday afternoons. Guests are encouraged to purchase advance tickets and plan to park by 1 PM Saturday & Sunday to arrive inside the festival for scheduled launches and activities. This festival is expected to sell out.

Throughout the weekend of flights, many pilots participate in Sanctioned Competitions. On Saturday and Sunday mornings, hot air balloons fly over the venue and spectators can observe the pilots' skillfully complete field tasks such as marker drops and a pole ring toss. Pilots at Carolina BalloonFest compete for points to enhance their standings in the national Hot Air Competition Division. A popular feature is the Pilot Meet & Greet, on Saturday and Sunday afternoons when select pilots and crews set up their gondolas for an hour on the field for engagements with balloon enthusiasts.

Come Early and Stay Late! In addition to the evening mass ascensions from the venue and morning flyover competitions, there are various activities for the entire family. Explore the ever-active Kids Zone with walk in balloon, inflatables, a bungee jumper, rock wall and magicians.

Outstanding performing artists are lined up to entertain all three days on Main Stage. The coffee house style 2nd Stage, hosts the talent of local musicians and more on Saturday and Sunday.

Guests can opt to experience tastes of NC Wines & Craft Beer Garden as a complement to all the outdoor festivities on Saturday and Sunday. Stroll through the Artisan Village, Marketplace and Merchandise tent. Taste a variety of great festival foods on Eat Street. Guests should bring cash as many vendors accept CASH only. Lines for cash at limited ATM machines on site can occur.

Community Appreciation Friday & Military Appreciation Sunday (retired veterans & active military enter free with military ID). Children age 12 and younger are admitted free. Purchase and save with Advance Tickets \$20/\$15 online at CarolinaBalloonFest.com through October 20. On site festival parking is reserved for guests with prepaid tickets. Spectators who prefer to purchase tickets on day of event must Park & Ride starting at 11am Saturday & Sundays only at Lot 3 / 630 South Main Street, Troutman, NC 28166 or Lot 4 / 213 Warrior Drive, Statesville, NC 28625. The shuttle is free until 4PM to the festival to purchase \$25/\$20 admission at the gate. Festival gate times are:

Friday, October 21 3:00pm – 8:30pm
Saturday, October 22 7:00am – 8:30pm
Sunday, October 23 7:00am – 6:00pm

All ballooning activities including static display, tethered rides and balloon flights are weather dependent. The decision to inflate hot air balloons is made just prior to the scheduled ballooning activity. Due to single lane entrance points into our festival, guests are encouraged to purchase advance tickets and PARK by 1 PM to attend late afternoon launches and scheduled activities. Tickets are non-refundable.

Carolina BalloonFest is organized by National Balloon Rally Charities, Inc. and soars each year to continue the heritage of hot air ballooning in Iredell County, spotlight the community of Statesville and donate a percentage proceeds to local nonprofit organizations who volunteer at the festival. In 2015, Carolina BalloonFest donated \$113,000 to over 2 dozen local nonprofits. National Balloon Rally Charities, Inc. is an incorporated 501(c)(3) charitable organization; all contributions are tax deductible.

For all official festival information, visit CarolinaBalloonFest.com and join us at facebook.com/carolinaballoonfest. #CarolinaBalloonFest

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