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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Carolina BalloonFest Weekend Takes Flight October 17

Statesville, NC (9/24/2014) - The 41st Annual Carolina BalloonFest takes flight October 17-19, 2014 at the Statesville Regional Airport where over 50 breath-taking hot air balloons and 4 unique special shapes will launch and decorate the skies of Iredell County. The traditional Balloon Glow, sponsored by **Black Automotive Group**, will light up Saturday evening to thrill festival guests.

Although hot air balloons only take flight after dawn and near dusk when the thermal atmosphere is most stable, tethered balloon rides are anchored to offer an abbreviated sensation of flight when elevated nearly 100 ft. above the ground. Weather permitting, hot air flights and tethered balloon rides are available to purchase direct with participating pilots throughout the weekend.

Throughout the weekend of flights, many pilots participate in Sanctioned Competitions, sponsored by **Energy United Propane**. On Saturday and Sunday mornings, 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 new feature this year is the Pilot Meet & Greet, hosted by **Carolinas Balloon Association** on Saturday and Sunday afternoons when select pilots and crews will set up their gondolas for an hour on the field for guest encounters.

Come Early and Stay Late! In addition to the evening mass ascensions from the venue and morning sanctioned competitions over the venue, there are various activities for the entire family. Register to run with the balloons on Sunday morning in the second annual 5K and Kids Fun Run managed by **Racing Toes Management** and sponsored by **Thorlo**. Explore the ever-active Kids Zone, sponsored by **Reliant Life Alert**, with inflatables, a bungy jumper, rock wall and magicians.

Entertainment on Main Stage, sponsored by **Wells Fargo**, opens Friday afternoon with Bing Futch, The Low Counts, Dr. Bacon and Albannach. The 3-day weekend music lineup also includes Vice Versa, One Leg Rooster, Gal Friday Band, Overmountain Men, The Cockman Family and Chuck Johnson & Charlyhorse. The coffee house style 2nd Stage, sponsored by **Our State Magazine**, hosts the talent of local musicians on Saturday and Sunday.

Guests can opt to experience NC Wines & Craft Beer Tasting, sponsored by **Wine Maestro Statesville**, to complement all the outdoor festivities on Saturday and Sunday. Tickets can be purchased day of event to enjoy this variety of creative offerings.

Carolina BalloonFest soars to benefit American Cancer Society (ACS) Relay for Life of Statesville, a signature annual event held each spring to celebrate those who have fought cancer, remember those lost to cancer and raise funds to create awareness and put an end to the disease. A percentage of proceeds also benefit community non-profits who volunteer at the festival.

This year of 2014 is the 45th Anniversary of the first hot air balloon flight in Iredell County made by Bill Meadows and Tracy Barnes. A commemorative flight will launch from the flight marker at Newtowne Plaza, Statesville, NC on Friday, October 17, near 8AM.

Community Appreciation Friday & Military Appreciation Sunday (retired veterans & active military enter free with military ID) is sponsored by **Yadkin Bank**. Cash only on day-of-event; adult admissions range from \$5 to \$15.00, children age 12 are admitted free. Save on Advance Ticket Purchase available online through October 16 via CarolinaBalloonFest.com. *Limited on-site parking.* Spectators are encouraged to take advantage of satellite parking at Iredell County Fairgrounds in Troutman with free shuttle service to the BalloonFest venue. Arrive by 2PM on Saturday and Sunday to ensure entry. Festival gate times are:

Friday, October 17 3:00pm – 8:30pm
Saturday, October 18 7:00am – 8:30pm
Sunday, October 19 7:00am – 6:00pm

To learn more, visit CarolinaBalloonFest.com and join us at facebook.com/carolinaballoonfest.

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