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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**May 2, 2005**

**“LET’S PLAY BALL!”**  
**DURHAM BULLS AND NC AMATEUR SPORTS HOST TOBACCO**  
**PREVENTION AWARENESS NIGHT**

***NC HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRUST FUND COMMISSIONER MARY ANN E.***  
***BLACK WILL RECEIVE GAME BALL***

(Durham, NC) – First up to bat, Durham resident and North Carolina Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF) Commissioner Mary Ann E. Black will kick-off tobacco-free night festivities at the Durham Bulls Athletic Park beginning at 5 p.m. on **Sunday, May 1**. She will be presented with a commemorative baseball.

The ball presentation is part of a statewide series of tobacco-free minor league baseball events sponsored by North Carolina Amateur Sports and TRU, short for Tobacco. Reality. Unfiltered., a statewide tobacco prevention campaign funded by HWTF. This event hopes to raise the awareness of tobacco prevention.

“It is important that we continue to reach young people and let them know that tobacco products are harmful to their bodies,” said Alison K. McLaurin, HWTF’s Marketing and Public Affairs Director. “What better way to reach young people than at a night at the ballpark.”

Currently, smoking is North Carolina’s leading cause of preventable death. Approximately 36 percent of high school students in North Carolina smoke, with more than 3,000 kids taking up the fatal habit each day. Roughly one-third of these young people will die prematurely from a tobacco-related disease.

**WHO:** HWTF Commissioner Mary Ann E. Black, HWTF, and North Carolina Amateur Sports

**WHAT:** Ball presentation

**WHERE:** Centerfield at the Durham Bulls Athletic Park, 409 Blackwell Street, Durham, NC

**WHEN:** Sunday, May 1 at 5 p.m.

**ABOUT THE NC HEALTH AND WELLNESS TRUST FUND:**

The NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund makes North Carolina stronger, both physically and economically, by funding programs that promote preventive health. Created by the General Assembly in 2000 to allocate a portion of North Carolina's share of the national tobacco settlement, HWTF has invested \$125 million to support preventive health initiatives and \$78 million to fund a prescription drug assistance program for seniors. For more information, please visit [www.hwtfc.org](http://www.hwtfc.org).

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