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FIVE NORTH CAROLINA PROGRAMS NAMED AMONG TOP 50 GOVERNMENT INNOVATIONS FOR 2007, WILL COMPETE FOR \$100,000 AWARD

CAMBRIDGE, Mass.—Five North Carolina successful programs aimed at linking citizens with important public services are among the 2007 Top 50 Government Innovations named by the Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government today. All are now semifinalists for the Innovations in American Government Awards and are eligible to win one of seven \$100,000 grants.

- The state's **Community Care** program is a physician-led Medicaid-managed care program of local provider networks serving 745,000 patients. The networks improve quality and access to care while saving millions of dollars.
- The state's **Ecosystem Enhancement Program** proactively compensates for unavoidable environmental damage to North Carolina's wetlands and waterways. The initiative restores, enhances and protects natural resources and assists responsible economic growth.
- Gov. Mike Easley's **Learn and Earn** initiative offers students the opportunity to attend high school for five years and attain both a high school diploma and an associate's degree or two years of university credit at no cost.
- The city of High Point's **Overt Drug Market Strategy** is a law enforcement/community partnership that collapses drug markets, reducing violence by directly engaging dealers and their families, creating predictable sanctions and offering a range of services.
- A self-directed tax by employers enables the staff of the Johnston County North Carolina **Workforce Development Center** to teach custom curriculums for specific employee skill enhancement.

"Government agencies today must have the ability to respond efficiently to the ever-changing needs of citizens," said Stephen Goldsmith, Director of the Innovations in American Government Program. "We are pleased to recognize these programs that have capitalized on creative thinking to increase the effectiveness of government."

The Top 50 Programs were selected from a pool of nearly 1,000 applicants representing all levels of government. These initiatives are being recognized for their novelty and creativity, effectiveness at addressing significant issues, and their potential to be replicated by other jurisdictions. They exemplify government's best efforts across a variety of policy areas, ranging from education to the environment, criminal justice to health care, and management to community development. The Top

50 programs will continue in the competition and remain eligible to win one of seven \$100,000 awards. **To download the full list of Top 50 programs, visit www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu.**

“The programs represent the very best of public management,” Ash Institute Director Gowher Rizvi added. “We are honored to highlight innovative practices that produce renewed confidence in public service.”

Eighteen finalists--selected from among the Top 50 Programs--will be announced on May 2. The Innovations in American Government Awards National Selection Committee, chaired by David Gergen, will then select seven winners, including two special awards: the Annie E. Casey Innovations Award in Children and Family System Reform, and the Fannie Mae Foundation Innovations Award in Affordable Housing. The seven recipients of the \$100,000 awards will be announced in the fall at a dinner celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Innovations in American Government Awards Program in Washington, D.C.

The Innovations in American Government Award is a program of the Roy Lila Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation. The Ash Institute advances excellence in governance and strengthens democratic institutions worldwide. Through its research, publications, leadership training, global network and awards program—developed in collaboration with a diverse, engaged community of scholars and practitioners—the Ash Institute fosters creative and effective government problem-solving and serves as a catalyst for addressing many of the most pressing needs of the world’s citizens. To learn more, please visit www.ashinstitute.harvard.edu.

PROGRAM CONTACTS

Ash Institute for Democratic Governance and Innovation

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Ecosystem Enhancement Program

State of North Carolina

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-More-

Learn and Earn

State of North Carolina

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Overt Drug Market Strategy

City of High Point, North Carolina

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Workforce Development Center

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