

News Release  
UNC School of Journalism and Mass Communication  
Scientific Properties, Inc.

For Immediate Release  
February 3, 2010

**Northeast Central Durham community news  
project to open newsroom at Golden Belt**

The Northeast Central Durham Community VOICE, a community news project staffed in part by local youth mentored by the journalism programs at UNC and N.C. Central University, is opening a newsroom at Golden Belt in downtown Durham.

Golden Belt's owner, Scientific Properties, is donating space in Building 4 for the VOICE, which went online in September at [durhamvoice.org](http://durhamvoice.org) with neighborhood news, information, photos, videos and features. The first print edition will be available this month.

Area youth interested in writing, photography, video, blogging, art or journalism are invited to a general interest meeting in the newsroom – equipped with cameras, video equipment and laptops – from 10 - 11 a.m. on Saturday, Feb. 13. The group will gather in Golden Belt's front visitor parking lot off of Main Street before meeting in the newsroom. Youth who contribute content to the VOICE will receive a \$25 Wal-Mart gift card for every submission accepted.

Jock Lauterer, director of the Carolina Community Media Project at the UNC School of Journalism and Mass Communication, is leading the effort that began more than a year ago as an idea from UNC Department of City and Regional Planning students looking for ways to revitalize the 300-block area of Northeast Central Durham known as "the bull's eye" to Durham police and community development officials for its high incidence of crime.

Lauterer partnered with NCCU professors Bruce dePyssler and Lisa Paulin, who are working with their students to provide content for the VOICE. Lauterer said the program has received strong support from Earl Phillips, assistant director for community engagement in the City of Durham's Department of Neighborhood Improvement Services.

Lauterer believes that strong community media helps strengthen communities by encouraging a vital civic life and developing a positive sense of place. The Daily Tar Heel, UNC's student newspaper, is covering the cost of printing 2,000 copies monthly for the first year of publication. The VOICE will be distributed at neighborhood offices, libraries, schools, churches and businesses.

"We want to empower youth to create a single source of local news for the Northeast

Central Durham community,” Lauterer said. “And we hope the young people putting out the paper will develop the skills to use their voices effectively in civic discussions while expanding their education and career options.”

The VOICE recruited its original youth staff primarily through a series of free, on-site photography lessons taught at NECD’s Salvation Army Boys’ and Girls’ Club, SeeSaw Studio and the Durham Inner-City Garden.

The Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation provided early support for the project with a \$25,000 grant for computers, cameras and other equipment. Lauterer is exploring more partnership opportunities with the Union Independent School in the NECD neighborhood.

“We believe in the VOICE project, and we are thankful to be in a position to help,” said Tucker Bartlett, chief operating officer at Scientific Properties. “When public entities, private companies, philanthropic organizations and community members all work together, great things can happen.”

For more information on the NECD Community VOICE, contact Lauterer at [jock@email.unc.edu](mailto:jock@email.unc.edu), dePyssler at [bdepyssler@ncsu.edu](mailto:bdepyssler@ncsu.edu), or Paulin at [lpaulin@ncsu.edu](mailto:lpaulin@ncsu.edu).

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**UNC School of Journalism and Mass Communication contact:** Kyle York, [sky@unc.edu](mailto:sky@unc.edu), 919.966.3323

**Scientific Properties contact:** Allison Polish, [allison.polish@scientificproperties.com](mailto:allison.polish@scientificproperties.com), 919.967.7700 x155