



MEMORABLE MEMO

James G. Martin
Governor



Karen Hayes Rotterman
Director of Communications

State of North Carolina Office of the Governor

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Contact: Karen Rotterman, Tim Pittman

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GOVERNOR MARTIN AND LT. GOVERNOR JORDAN TO SERVE HONORARY CO-CHAIRMAN OF NORTH CAROLINA HOT-AIR BALLOON PROJECT

RALEIGH -- Governor James G. Martin and Lt. Governor Robert B. Jordan, III, announced today that they have agreed to serve as honorary co-chairmen of a private initiative to build and fly a special hot-air balloon that will represent the state of North Carolina. To be constructed and operated at no cost to the state, the balloon will bear the state's name and will fly nationally and internationally at balloon rallies, large festivals and special events such as the Rose Bowl and the World Series.

"North Carolina is proud of its heritage as the state of first flight," Martin said, "and this beautiful balloon will continue in that great tradition that began in Kitty Hawk 84 years ago. It is especially gratifying to me that we will be able to launch the balloon at absolutely no cost to taxpayers."

"The balloon, which will feature beautiful scenes from across the state, will be built in Statesville at the world's largest balloon manufacturing facility. This new North Carolina balloon will be used worldwide to draw balloon pilots and enthusiasts to Statesville and other North Carolina cities that stage balloon festivals. It will be a great tool for our tourism industry," continued Martin.

"I am particularly impressed by the loyalty and love for North Carolina that is being displayed by the organizers of the balloon project," Jordan said. "Their efforts remind me of the U.S.S. North Carolina project in 1960. It would have been easy for the battleship committee to seek funding from the General Assembly, but, instead, they raised the necessary funds through donations of nickels, dimes and quarters from school children and others. Once constructed next year, this beautiful balloon will belong to all of the people of the state. It will represent the great craftsmanship and spirit of the people of North Carolina."

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Governor's Office, Communications
116 W. Jones St., Raleigh, N C 27611
(919) 733-5612

Toll free 1-800-662-7005
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Tim Pittman
Press Secretary

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Edward "Chip" Parks of Fayetteville, a commercial balloon pilot and one of the founders of the North Carolina Balloon Corporation, a not-for-profit organization, said, "Our hope is that we will be able to launch this beautiful craft in May or June of 1988. We will be appealing to members of the General Assembly to designate it as the state's official hot-air balloon, a title that would add a great deal of prestige to this balloon."

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Well, why not?

Who would you pick to be honorary co-chairmen of the North Carolina Hot-Air Balloon Project? You wouldn't pick someone who was short of hot air, would you? Of course not. You'd want professional elocutionists who can keep the oral jet stream in full blow, with gusts of up to 180 words a minute, and who have the ability to sustain excess verbiage for hours on end without gulping or wheezing for air. Who better, then, than the chief rivals for the governorship in 1988? We don't know if this is a trial balloon or not, but we do know that Jim Martin and Bob Jordan ought to be able to get it off the ground without any untoward huffing and puffing.

Meanwhile, if you've spotted a hot memo wafting by on the gentle zephyrs of state government, float it our way. Anonymity guaranteed, even to blow-hards, windbags, and airheads.