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Contact: Margaret Arbuckle, Executive Director
Address: 902 Bonner Dr., Jamestown, NC 27282
Phone: 336-841-4332; E-mail: GEA@GuilfordEducationAlliance.org

Jarvis Harris, Board Chair
Phone: 336.373.0981

Contact: Phillip D. Morgan, Piedmont Natural Gas, Community Relations Manager, Northern Region
Phone: 336-271-5103; Fax: 336-273-9566; Cell: 336- 314-5397
E-mail: phillip.morgan@piedmontng.com

**Guilford Education Alliance
Receives \$25K Education Grant from
Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation**

Guilford County, North Carolina: The Guilford Education Alliance announces that it has been selected to receive the Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation 2011 STEM Education Grant. Piedmont's STEM grant is intended to support education in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math. The grant will be awarded at a **Press Briefing on Thursday, August 18 at 11 a.m. at the Guilford Education Alliance office, 902 Bonner Drive in Jamestown, NC.** (Located beside the Ragsdale YMCA building)

Kevin O'Hara, Senior Vice President for Piedmont Natural Gas, George Baldwin, President of the Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation, and Phillip Morgan, Community Relations Manager for the Northern Region of Piedmont Natural Gas, will be there to present the grant to Margaret Arbuckle, Executive Director of the Guilford Education Alliance.

This grant in the amount of \$25,000 will be used to establish and fund a Piedmont Natural Gas Teaching Fellows program for STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) teachers employed by the Guilford County School system. Educators selected for the program will spend two weeks in local industries to gain real world working experience in their educational specialty. Armed with this externship experience, the Piedmont fellows can make their classroom activities more relevant for their students.

“There is concern for the future well being of our national society as we witness global competition resulting from other countries' innovation and scientific discoveries. In North Carolina and Guilford County we are in the midst of re-inventing our future economic well being, moving from a manufacturing to a knowledge-based economy that requires knowledge of science, mathematics and creative problem solving capabilities. Many national leaders have called for greater emphasis on science education, greater rigor and relevance for our students. As an educational advocacy

organization, Guilford Education Alliance welcomes this opportunity as we work to make rigorous and relevant education the number one priority of our county community,” said Dr. Margaret Arbuckle, Executive Director of Guilford Education Alliance.

“The importance of STEM education is recognized as one means of meeting our societal challenges but creating the opportunities for teachers to connect the classroom experience with the application of STEM knowledge remains a challenge. Although teachers recognize the importance of making classroom experiences relevant for students in order to understand the application of the experiences to a potential job, teachers repeatedly report their discomfort in understanding the “world of work” and what is required, as their teacher training is focused on pedagogy and minimally on workplace uses for mathematics, biology, chemistry, physics, earth science, etc. Through this grant, Guilford Education Alliance will provide opportunity for our teachers to address this disconnect by providing them with opportunities to experience the work world and the application of their teaching through externships in STEM related industries in our county,” stated Dr. Arbuckle.

Piedmont Natural Gas Senior Vice President and Chief Administrative Officer, Kevin O’Hara commented, “Piedmont is pleased to bring this resource into Guilford County in support of STEM education in local schools. We support the Guildford Education Alliance and their mission to improve education by helping teachers witness the business application of the subjects they teach.”

Guilford Education Alliance, a private non-profit organization, works to make public education the TOP priority for Guilford County and has as one of its goals, “Promote community and corporate engagement in support of quality education.”

Piedmont Natural Gas is an energy services company primarily engaged in the distribution of natural gas to more than one million residential, commercial and industrial utility customers in North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee, including 52,000 customers served by municipalities who are wholesale customers. Our subsidiaries are invested in joint venture, energy- related businesses, including unregulated retail natural gas marketing, interstate natural gas storage and intrastate natural gas transportation. More information about Piedmont Natural Gas is available at www.piedmontng.com.

The Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation was established in 2004 with initial funding of \$7 million from Piedmont Natural Gas. The Piedmont Natural Gas Foundation assists qualified charitable agencies and organizations within Piedmont Natural Gas' three-state service area, through the awarding of grants. The Foundation's mission of, "Enriching Our Communities," mirrors Piedmont Natural Gas' strong philanthropic commitment to the communities it serves. The Foundation's grant making strategy further reflects that commitment by focusing on two areas: Environmental Stewardship and Energy Sustainability, and Community Enrichment Initiatives centered on Education, Workforce Development and Health and Human Services.

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