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**May 7, 2008, CHARLOTTE, NC** In a time when many are complaining of recession, job loss and an economic slowdown, two native Charlotteans are expanding their business. Sean Hertel and Marty Karriker opened Charlotte Insurance in April of 1992, selling primarily Home, Auto, & Business insurance. Their four offices in the Charlotte area are soon to be six. Plans are in place to open offices in Mooresville and Cornelius next month. Sean Hertel, Vice President of Charlotte Insurance said, "The population base in Charlotte has grown dramatically. According to the Chamber, there are 8,000 people moving into the Charlotte metro each month. When this down economic cycle reverses, we want to be ready to handle all of the growth." Hertel estimates that this cycle will reverse itself in the next 12-18 months.

But this downturn in the economy hasn't hurt their business. They recorded 10% growth in 2007 and are projecting 20% growth in 2008 with the addition of these two new offices. Why their growth in a down market? Hertel says, "If you call one of the national insurance companies, they give you one rate because they are one company. We are brokers who can shop all of the Top Insurance Companies to get our clients the best insurance rates in the entire marketplace. We're the Travelocity of insurance." Apparently, it's working for them. Hertel says they are able to save their clients up to \$500 a year on auto insurance alone and up to \$1000 per year on combined packages of home/auto.

But this isn't the only expansion happening within their four walls. Hertel and Karriker are also opening a subsidiary of Charlotte Insurance called Charlotte Insurance and Financial Group. By bringing in talent from other industries, they will now be poised to handle business they previously could not take. Bill Webb of Capitol Employee Benefit Advisors, is stepping in as a partner to run the group health division. And Dave Serepca and Chris Griggs, from John Hancock Financial, will also be joining the firm as partners to handle wealth management and financial planning services. Their business model allows them to be a full service insurance agency. From Workers Comp to General Liability, life insurance to homeowners insurance, health insurance and wealth management, Charlotte Insurance now offers it all. They are licensed to do business in both North Carolina and South Carolina.

Their goal is to have 12 offices in the Charlotte metro area in the next two years. They are growing so quickly that they will have one centralized corporate location by the end of the year. They are currently looking at several properties in uptown Charlotte.

"It's a great time to expand in the Charlotte market. Costs are less in times like these and for us right now it makes sense to grow", said Hertel.