**Press Release: Bonnie Hauser to Run for Orange County Commissioner at Large**

**For Immediate Release**

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Bonnie Hauser is running for Orange County Commissioner. After years of working on important issues affecting Orange County communities, Bonnie is asking voters for a seat at the table so that she can better serve their interests. She will be running in the Democratic Primary for the at large seat – which represents the entire county, including the towns of Chapel Hill, Carrboro, and Hillsborough.

*“Citizens throughout Orange County have learned to trust me over the years, and have confidence that I will provide authentic, open leadership, relying on facts and community priorities to shape my decisions. I would be honored to be an Orange County commissioner.”*

Bonnie started working on local issues in 2008, when she joined others to create Orange County Voice (OCV) in order to stop UNC’s airport and the county’s Waste Transfer Station. The group made inroads throughout the county to raise awareness of real facts and alternatives. They found better solutions for communities and the environment, while saving taxpayers millions of dollars.

In 2009, UNC helped OCV secure their 501C-3 status. Bonnie and the team continued to work on issues involving land use, the environment, and community building.

*“ OCV started as a rural advocacy group, to clarify how the rural community complements our towns and University. Our communities are not all the same, and we need flexible county services that are accessible and affordable for all of us. We can no longer rely on a single faction to represent diverse interests. We need processes that engage all our voices – and that are grounded in real facts and data. When people are informed, they engage fully and effectively.”*

Bonnie also sits on the board of Justice United (JU), where she co-chaired the Environmental Justice team that worked with the Rogers Road community to secure a firm date to close the landfill, and to finally deliver on promises for water, sewer and a community center. She also worked with JU’s team to secure fair sewer rates in Efland.

Bonnie most proud of her work in Emergency Services, where she helped to create a collaborative process – that included the towns and UNC - to improve emergency communications and response times. At the time, radio outages were placing firefighters and others at risk, and ambulance response times were unacceptable. Rather than spending millions on substations and expensive equipment, the workgroup recommended investments in the 9-1-1 call center and radio technology, new staffing and training, and co-locating ambulances in fire stations.

Bonnie credits Commissioner Earl McKee, and then Commissioner Valerie Foushee for providing important leadership on the Emergency Services Workgroup. The workgroup process, including how they engaged UNC and consultants, inspires Bonnie’s interest in collaboration, technology and communication for future services.

Bonnie is actively involved in public transportation, emphasizing the need to serve planned population centers as well as “transit dependent communities”, i.e., low income commuters, seniors and others who prefer not to drive. She is concerned about the short and long term plans for trash and recycling, and the ongoing role of the county’s solid waste department now that the landfill is closed. She is committed to working with towns and the region on both of these issues.

Bonnie wants to work with local leaders and communites to change the way the county does business, in order to prepare for challenges that lie ahead. Our population is aging, and planned growth and density in towns and in the county’s Economic Development Districts will impact demand for services. In addition, the state has cut funding to schools and vulnerable populations, while educators adapt to the state’s core curriculum. Even extreme weather is becoming a local issue, impacting emergency preparedness and response. Our commitment to high quality education and services must meet new demands for affordability and accessibility. Plus we need to clarify the rules to make it easier to do business with and in the county.

Bonnie’s supporters believe she is giving voters a meaningful choice – to continue the status quo, or to prepare for the future. She brings credentials as a successful businesswoman, practical problem solver and a community leader. She is committed to advancing quality education and services in changing times, by working with local leaders and our communities to:

* ***Plan for a changing future*** that includes more seniors, focused density, and regional connections.
* ***Build trust and relationships as a priority*,** replacing standalone departments (“silos”) and top-down control with processes that engage towns, citizens and experts.
* ***Foster collaboration between our towns and rural areas, and respect differences****.* High quality services are flexible and adaptable, and should be accessible to communities throughout the county. Its not “one size fits all” or rural-urban, but a process to foster collaboration and find the best ways to work together to serve diverse communities.
* ***Include Costs and Other Factors in Decision- Making,*** and allow meaningful data about demographics and usage, performance, and comparative costs to influence discussions and inform seemingly conflicting or contradictory views.
* ***Insist on Transparency*** and openly share facts, communications and concerns.

*“I see the county through my lens as a successful business leader. I’ve helped many organizations – not by having all the answers, but by asking important questions about priority, value, and cost. I like thinking out-of-the-box, but any good alternative has to be tempered with facts and values. To me, the greatest challenge, is anticipating how things might change in the future. More than ever, governments are at risk of offering yesterday’s solutions to today’s problems. In my opinion, Orange County is spending too much time with architects and designers, and not enough time with communities, experts and the professionals on the ground who have different ideas about what’s needed for the future. “*

Bonnie moved to Orange County in 2003 when she retired from the partnership of PricewaterhouseCoopers. She specialized in working with healthcare and pharmaceutical companies to restructure and simplify operations, and become more customer-oriented. She worked under the Clinton administration to help shape what became Medicare Part D.

After living in Manhattan, Chicago and Evanston Illinois, Bonnie surprised everyone when she moved to rural Orange County. For Bonnie, it’s been a wonderful journey into new styles of community that were completely foreign in her urban, corporate life. She cherishes the relationships she has built throughout the county.

Her family has been here for decades. Her brothers and their wives raised their families here. Her mother, Rebecca, lives in Carrboro. Bonnie lives in Bingham Township with three rescue dogs, Linus, Charlie and Brodie.

Bonnie has stepped down from her role on the boards of OCV and JU, and continues to serve on the boards of Big Brothers and Big Sisters of the Triangle and Maple View Agricultural Education Center. She volunteers at Orange County Schools and the Chapel Hill-Durham Holocaust Speakers Bureau.

She has a BA, magna cum laude, from SUNY at Buffalo and an MBA from New York University. Bonnie is 60 years old.

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