



January 12, 2010

Thank you from Preserve Rural Orange

It's been an amazing year in rural Orange County, with good news at both beginning and end. A year ago we were getting ready to open the "No Airport" photo exhibit on January 9th when UNC Chancellor Holden Thorp announced that the university would not convene an airport authority or pursue a new airport in Orange County as planned, but would relocate flights to RDU. Afterward we turned our attention to the county's plans to build a waste transfer station site on Highway 54. Eleven months later on December 7th, Orange County Commissioners decided not to build a new transfer station and instead send chose to trash to an existing facility in Durham and allow time to explore alternatives.

When we first began talking about how to stop UNC's plans to build an airport over a year ago, our discussion centered on how we would raise enough money to hire a lawyer. A friend and environmental attorney counseled us to build our community first, and this turned out to be the best advice. Fortunately we never had to hire a lawyer at all, and at every step of the way when we looked for help, we found what we needed close to home.

Even as we collectively researched, raised legitimate concerns and came together to oppose plans that would have transformed the rural landscape, none of us could have imagined how much we would accomplish in such a short time. And none of it would have been possible without our uniquely resourceful community.

We would like to recognize each of your generous contributions of time, resources, and expertise:

To all who gave financially, thank you.

To all who kept track of airport plans, alerted neighbors and drafted petitions, thank you.

To all who collected petition signatures in your neighborhood and in your businesses, churches and community centers, thank you.

To all who planned meetings, copied and distributed fliers, and turned out by the hundreds with maps and documents at community meetings, thank you.

To all who put signs in yards and on roadsides, and bumper stickers on your cars and trucks, thank you.

Thank you from Preserve Rural Orange *(continued)*

To all who researched the issues, shared information and insights, networked, wrote articles, letters to media and elected officials and spoke out at public and private meetings, thank you.

To all who opened your homes and shared family stories and love of your land and farms with reporters, photographers and neighbors, thank you.

To all who served as speakers and consultants and to all who donated professional services— legal assistance; research; database, website and organizational development; graphics; photography; videography; interviewing, writing, editing and more—thank you.

To all who raised public awareness and kept the issues alive by talking with family, friends, coworkers and public officials, thank you.

You got involved, stayed involved and made a difference in countless ways. We appreciate your support, and we thank you for preserving our precious and increasingly threatened rural landscape. When we drive home each day through rolling farmland and woods, we're truly grateful to see what was almost lost.

As we move forward and continue to make the case for more sustainable solutions to protect the rural county from damaging development, we're proud and inspired to be members of this thoughtful, giving and powerful community.

Best wishes from the Preserve Rural Orange Board of Directors for peace, joy and good health in the year ahead. We hope you will have time throughout the year to enjoy our quiet, green surroundings and dark skies.

Warmly,

*Alex Castro
Nancy Holt
Cliff Leath*

*Jack Pless
Tom Schopler
Laura Streitfeld*