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CONTACT: March Kessler
mkessler@ecmc.org



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ECMC Scholars PROGRAM

ECMC Foundation Increases Pledge to \$1,800,000 in Higher Education Scholarships to Virginia Students *Funds Third Cycle of ECMC Scholars Program*

ECMC Foundation announced the funding of the third cycle of its ECMC Scholars Program, committing \$1.8 million in scholarships to Virginia public high school students. Three hundred students now are eligible to earn up to \$6,000 each in scholarships for higher education. In addition, ECMC Foundation has provided \$120,000 to high schools for student activities and stipends to program faculty mentors. ECMC Scholars Program seeks to increase participation in postsecondary education by economically or otherwise disadvantaged students, and to challenge those students to better prepare for postsecondary education during their junior and senior years of high school.

“We are very proud of our first class of ECMC Scholars who will graduate high school in 2005 and continue on to pursue higher education,” said ECMC Foundation President Jennifer Wise. “Virginia high school students class of 2006 and class of 2007 will receive this same support to continue their education.”

ECMC Foundation with the assistance of the Virginia Department of Education, selected 10 schools from throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia, according to need-based criteria. Each high school forms its own ECMC Scholars Program committee, made up of guidance counselors, teachers, and principals, that establishes academic standards, identifies students for program participation, and determines eligibility for postsecondary tuition scholarships.

Each school’s ECMC Scholars Program committee tracks the performance of the candidates during their junior and senior years. Student participants are advised on their level of academic progress, and encouraged to maintain or increase their academic performance to assure receipt of the ECMC Scholars Program scholarship. Each successful candidate will receive an initial \$4,000 award for tuition at an accredited postsecondary institution. Upon the successful completion of the first year of postsecondary study and re-enrollment for a second year, each student will receive an additional award of \$2,000.

“The ECMC Scholars Program provides a powerful incentive for students whose achievement in high school signals their potential for success in college,” said Dr. Jo Lynne DeMary, Virginia Superintendent of Public Instruction. “By encouraging and rewarding these students, ECMC is helping the commonwealth create a culture of achievement.”

ECMC Scholars Program is distinctive in that scholarship candidates are selected by educators who personally know them and can judge their potential. Each committee has the opportunity to customize the

program to the needs of their specific student population. ECMC Scholars are challenged to earn their scholarships by meeting specially designed performance expectations established by their own counselors and teachers, rather than competing with a large pool of potential grant recipients in a general, nonspecific program.

Fully funded for three years, ECMC Scholars Program is envisioned as a five-year program, providing up to \$3 million in scholarships to Virginia students, contingent on future funding availability. ECMC Foundation plans to present the results of the program to private corporations to raise funds for “adopt a high school,” which will continue the program beyond the initial five years.

ECMC Foundation operates under the umbrella of ECMC Group, a nonprofit holding company with affiliated for-profit and nonprofit corporations. Headquartered in St. Paul, Minn., with offices in Eugene, Ore., Santa Fe, N.M., and Richmond, Va., ECMC Group fulfills its mission, Helping Educate America, by providing a wide range of services to students, schools, lenders, and the U.S. Department of Education.