



RELEASE DATE: October 19, 2005

**JOHN HAGER TO CUT RIBBON ON ROANOKE VALLEY REHABILITATIVE
EQUIPMENT PROGRAM**

FREE Foundation and Goodwill Kick Off Collaborative Program

John Hager, assistant secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services for the U.S. Department of Education, will cut the ribbon on a new collaborative program designed to provide further access to mobility related rehabilitation equipment for those in need.

The celebration is set for Friday, October 28, 11:30 a.m. at the Goodwill Industries of the Valleys Salem location on 1493 East Main Street. Tours and refreshments will follow the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

The Foundation for Rehabilitation Equipment & Endowment (FREE) and Goodwill began a pilot program in April 2005 to create a one-of-a-kind equipment housing and cleaning program to serve communities throughout southwest and southside Virginia. Donations to FREE of mobility related equipment are made at any Goodwill retail location in the Roanoke Valley. Individuals with disabilities and disadvantages that Goodwill serves then prepare the equipment, for distribution and house it on-site at the Salem Facility. FREE, a non-profit organization based in Roanoke, then provides the equipment at no cost to qualified adults to improve their mobility and independence.

Prior to his current appointment, Hager, who uses a wheelchair, became the director of Virginia's homeland security soon after the events of Sept. 11, 2001, and served in that position until 2004. In 1997, he was elected to Virginia's second-highest office, lieutenant governor, and served in that position for four years.

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