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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**ENGINEERING START-UP BRIDGES NEW TECHNOLOGY WITH OLD-FASHIONED
TENACITY TO BUILD SUCCESS**

Durham, N.C., March 30, 2007—Exactly five years ago, Dan and Meg Richards founded ZellComp, Inc., a company that designs and markets innovative composite products for use in bridge decks and parking decks as well as military applications, such as ship decks. They began with little more than a vision and a kitchen table. The business soon moved into the spare bedroom, where incubation continued.

Knowing that America’s infrastructure of highways and bridges requires laborious repair—with much of it far behind schedule—Dan Richards, president and CEO, devised an improved bridge deck system using technologically advanced composite materials. The product is not particularly noticeable to drivers focused on getting somewhere, but it offers long-term value and safety to taxpayers. “Unlike structures of concrete and steel, the ZellComp prefabricated bridge deck system is lightweight and corrosion resistant, offers accelerated construction and reduced life cycle costs, is easy to inspect and is adaptable to different bridge types and sizes,” said Dan Richards, Ph.D., P.E.

The Richards had a patented product but needed to demonstrate its application and marketability. ZellComp proved the viability of the product by testing several prototypes at North Carolina State University. The results were impressive, and departments of transportation took notice. About the same time, the Richards moved out of the crowded home office and into a modest office suite. “The blizzard of paper never lets up, from proposals to correspondence,” said Meg Richards, chief operating officer. “To build our business, we stay in constant contact with federal and state transportation officials as well as experts in the private sector.”

ZellComp raised funds, took the plunge to enter commercial production, and landed its first contracts. Adding to the product’s credibility was extensive independent testing performed during 2006 by the Florida Department of Transportation and the University of Central Florida.

ZellComp added more employees and late last year completed installation of its first decking system for a bridge on Tangier Island, Va. The ZellComp deck also meets a need in Florida, where the system is slated to be used to replace an open steel grating system on a movable bridge. ZellComp has several other contracts under negotiation.

Late last year The Office of Naval Research selected ZellComp to participate in research related to fire-resistant resins to be used with composite structures in naval vessels. ZellComp’s partner in this research endeavor is North Carolina State University. “This project is an important step for ZellComp,” said Dan Richards. “We are demonstrating the flexibility of our knowledge and diversity of our products’ applications across public and private sectors.” The funds provided by the Navy were partially matched by the One North Carolina SBIR/STTR Matching Funds Program.

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