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**Contact: Chip Forrester
615-429-0840**

Statement by Bill Freeman

I take great pride in being a Nashvillian. I was born here. I was raised here. I met my wife here. I have worked here and we've raised our three children here. Nashville is a part of me, and I would not have it any other way. I truly love this city and the people who make it such a special place.

Thirty-five years ago, with my business partner Jimmy Webb, we started our company, Freeman Webb, right here in Nashville. At that time all we had was one employee, one apartment complex and one big dream.

Today, through years of hard work and perseverance we are a billion dollar business that employs almost 500 people and either manages or owns over 17,000 apartment units across the southeast.

For me, for my family and for that company that started with just one big dream – Nashville has been very good to us.

During the 35 years that we have been in business and the lifetime I have lived here, past Mayors of our city have had a vision for Nashville. Think of the vision that went into building Nashville as a center for scholarship and learning, for music culture and entertainment, and the vision to make Nashville a regional and national center for business and commerce.

And along the way, these visionaries maintained the traditional culture of our city where people can still raise their families, look after their neighbors and, more often than not, do business on a handshake.

Right now we face a critical moment in the stewardship of our extraordinary city and determining what it will look like 10 years from now and 20 years from now.

Mayor Karl Dean is fond of saying, “I believe Nashville’s best days are still ahead.” But those “best days” are no forgone conclusion. Rather, they are dependent on the steady vision and leadership from a Mayor ready to guide Nashville into the next generation.

It is imperative that we make Nashville a place where people not only want to, but can, raise their families, educate their children and make an honest living. I want my grandchildren to grow up in a Nashville like that and the next Mayor of Nashville must be prepared to make the important decisions about the kind of city we are going to be in 10 years or 20 years.

I want to be that next Mayor.

The next Mayor of Nashville will not have time for any “on the job training.” In order to sustain the momentum our city has built, Nashville needs a Mayor who can step in and on day one, make the critical decisions and get right to work.

I can be that next Mayor.

I have a sense of what those critical decisions are and I have strong feelings about what makes this city great. I'd like to put my experience and skills to work and lead Nashville forward at this truly exciting time in our city.

Every day I walk into Freeman Webb and make critical decisions for a billion dollar business. Those decisions affect the lives of almost 500 employees and the thousands of people who live in the apartments we own and manage. No, “on the job training” will be necessary for me if elected the next Mayor of Nashville.

To me, being a Mayor is the most satisfying job you can have in public service. You see and experience the direct results of your decisions every day; unlike you can in any state or federal position. The decisions you make have a direct result on the family in front of you in line at the grocery store. They affect the schools where your children and grandchildren attend, and directly impact the lives of those who sit next to you at church on Sunday.

We need a Mayor of Nashville who understands that. The next mayor has to understand that even what may seem like mundane tasks, such as having the trash trucks run when they are supposed to run, is something vitally important to the people of Nashville and their day-to-day lives.

The next Mayor of Nashville also has to understand the gravity and importance of decisions that will make our schools the leaders of innovation, and not those playing catch up. The next Mayor of Nashville has to understand the importance of not only keeping businesses in Nashville, but recruiting others to relocate not just near Nashville, but inside our city limits.

I want to be that next Mayor.

Today is December 19 and there are still eight months until the citizens of Nashville will elect a new Mayor. In the coming months there are a number of items I will be talking about, such as:

- How Nashville schools need to be better, and how we will accomplish that.
- How to tackle the mass transit challenges we are facing.
- How to keep Nashville trending upward with successful economic development.

For now though, we are only six days away from Christmas and everyone should be focused on spending time with their families. We will talk more about my vision for Nashville in the New Year, but I want you to know the answer to the most important question, why I am running for Mayor of Nashville.

I am running for Mayor, because I want to add my unique point of view to this conversation.

I am running for Mayor to give something back to the city that has given me everything. I am running for Mayor so I can do everything I can to ensure that my grandchildren and the children across our beautiful city each have the opportunities in front of them to do what Jimmy Webb and I did 35 years ago.

The decisions the next Mayor of Nashville makes will have an impact on their lives years from now and determine the kind of city that Nashville will become.

Growing up in Nashville set the stage for me to become the successful businessman I am today. Now, I want to be the Mayor of Nashville that sets the stage for the next generation. If the people of Nashville choose to come together behind my ideas, I'd be honored to lead this great city into its exciting future.