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## **Tobacco Helpline Serves Thousands of Oklahomans**

*Rush Expected for Great American Smokeout 2006*

OKLAHOMA CITY – The Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust announced today that nearly 17,000 Oklahomans called the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline last year and that a surge in the number of calls is expected for the Great American Smokeout being held this Thursday. The toll-free Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline, 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) is a professional, telephone-based tobacco cessation service provided at no charge to Oklahomans who want to quit using tobacco.

Each year since 1977, the American Cancer Society has sponsored the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November to help smokers quit cigarettes for at least one day, in hopes they will quit forever. The 2006 Great American Smokeout will be Thursday, November 16.

Following are facts on the use of the Helpline during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2006:

- 16,114 Oklahoma tobacco users registered for Helpline services, up from 12,367 the previous fiscal year. In addition, 175 health care providers and 514 family or friends of tobacco users received information to assist their patients and loved ones.
- Registrants called from 76 of Oklahoma's 77 counties (only Cimarron county was not represented) and from 33 of 39 federally-recognized Native American tribes in Oklahoma.
- Health care providers sent in 234 "fax referrals" to the Helpline
- Over twice as many females (65%) as males (32%) registered for Helpline services.
- 273 of the registrants were pregnant or breast-feeding mothers.
- 94% of Helpline participants would recommend the Helpline to others.

**(more)**

“We’re extremely pleased to see so many Oklahomans taking advantage of the free services offered by the Helpline,” said Tracey Strader, executive director of the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust. “The word is spreading across the state that there’s real help on the other end of the line whenever you’re ready.”

The Helpline provides free, personalized assistance by professional Quit Coaches®. Callers enrolled in the Helpline’s program work with the same quit coach throughout the quitting process. During a series of up to five telephone sessions, the coaches assist callers in developing and working through a quit plan based on their individual needs.

The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline’s hours of operation are 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. seven days a week, and staff will return any messages left after hours.

For more information about the Helpline, please see:

[http://www.ok.gov/tset/Programs/Tobacco\\_Use\\_Prevention\\_and\\_Cessation/Oklahoma\\_Tobacco\\_Helpline/](http://www.ok.gov/tset/Programs/Tobacco_Use_Prevention_and_Cessation/Oklahoma_Tobacco_Helpline/)

For more information on the benefits of quitting smoking, please see:

<http://www.cancer.org/downloads/COM/WhenSmkrsQuit.pdf>

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