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Great American Smokeout Expanded to Two Days This Year

All Oklahoma Smokers Urged to Quit for Great American Smokeout and Statehood Day

OKLAHOMA CITY – The American Cancer Society and the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust are urging all smokers in Oklahoma to quit smoking for at least two days next week – the Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 15 and Oklahoma’s Centennial on Friday, November 16.

Each year since 1977, the American Cancer Society has sponsored the Great American Smokeout on the third Thursday of November to spotlight the health dangers of tobacco use and the importance of quitting smoking to improve individual health and promote better, safer communities. This year’s Great American Smokeout will take place on Thursday, November 15.

“Thousands of smokers across the country take part in the Great American Smokeout each year,” said Kristen Taylor, regional communications director for the American Cancer Society in Oklahoma. “In observance of the Centennial celebration on November 16, we’re urging Oklahomans to give up tobacco products for at least one extra day this year. It’s a day-by-day battle; quitting for two days in a row will hopefully lead to a smoke-free lifetime.”

“As our state’s first century comes to a close, tobacco use remains our number one cause of preventable death,” said Tracey Strader, executive director of the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust. “The good news is most smokers want to quit and free help is just a phone call or a click away.”

The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline, 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) provides free, personalized assistance by professional Quit Coaches®. The Coaches work with Helpline callers to develop a quit plan tailored to their individual needs. Up to four follow-up calls with a quit

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coach and nicotine patches or gum are also provided free of charge. The 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.

Smokers seeking assistance in quitting are also encouraged to visit the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout website, www.greatamericansmokeout.org, to find tips, tools and resources that help with the process of quitting tobacco. New interactive desktop helpers can be downloaded, as well, to help smokers pick a quit day, prepare for quitting, and offer support after they have quit.

"Smokers who make a plan, pick a day to quit, and receive some type of support are most successful at quitting," said Taylor. "Choosing the Great American Smokeout as the day to quit and using all available resources gives smokers a greater chance of quitting for good."

The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline is sponsored by the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust, the Oklahoma State Department of Health, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For more information on the Helpline, please see:

<http://www.ok.gov/tset/Programs/Helpline.html>.

The American Cancer Society is dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by saving lives, diminishing suffering and preventing cancer through research, education, advocacy and service. Founded in 1913 and with national headquarters in Atlanta, the Society has 13 regional Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. For more information anytime, call toll free 1-800-ACS-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

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