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## Resolutions Adopted to Reduce Tobacco Use in Oklahoma TSET Board Encourages Legislators to Take Action

**OKLAHOMA CITY** (December 12, 2008) – At their annual retreat held recently in Oklahoma City, the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET) Board of Directors unanimously approved two resolutions encouraging legislators to take important action to reduce tobacco use in our state. Both resolutions are similar to those passed by the Oklahoma State Board of Health and the Oklahoma Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation Advisory Committee.

“Tobacco addiction is our state’s leading cause of preventable death,” said outgoing TSET Chair, Ken Rowe. “It is important that those who are dedicated to improving the health of Oklahomans speak with one voice where tobacco is concerned.”

One resolution recommends repeal of the exemptions in the current Smoking in Public Places and Workplaces Act, which currently permits smoking rooms and smoking inside some public places and workplaces. Secondhand tobacco smoke is a significant risk to the health of non-smokers as most recently documented in the 2006 Report of the Surgeon General. Twenty-five states and hundreds of cities across the country have already passed laws prohibiting smoking throughout workplaces including all restaurants and bars.

A second resolution recommends restoring the right of Oklahoma communities to adopt local ordinances related to tobacco use that are stronger than state law. According to internal tobacco industry documents, tobacco lobbyists encouraged the addition of ‘pre-emptive’ clauses to Oklahoma state law beginning in 1986 to block the long-standing rights of communities to address our state’s leading cause of preventable deaths.

**-More-**

## Resolutions Adopted to Reduce Tobacco Use in Oklahoma - ADD ONE

The TSET Board also recognized the Lawton-Ft. Sill Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) Team who were named national Youth Advocates of the Year by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and received a Blue Cross Blue Shield Champions of Health Award this year for their leadership in the fight against tobacco. The Lawton-Ft. Sill SWAT Team, supported by Comanche County Memorial Hospital (a TSET-funded grantee), is fighting the tobacco industry through interactive community projects, educational trainings and policy advocacy.

“To keep making profits, the tobacco industry needs new “replacement” smokers to replace those who have quit smoking or died as a result of their tobacco use. The tobacco industry’s aggressive marketing tactics significantly influence our youth and young adults,” said Tracey Strader, TSET executive director. “The Lawton-Ft. Sill SWAT Team, along with more than 2,500 teens across the state, has united to expose big tobacco’s marketing practices and resist its influence while working on changing all Oklahomans attitudes about tobacco.”

The TSET Board elected new officers to serve one year terms, including Casey Killblane of Davis, Okla. as Chair and Dr. Robert McCaffree of Oklahoma City, Okla. as Vice Chair.

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*The Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust was established through a constitutional amendment approved by Oklahoma voters in November 2000. While most state governments have failed to keep their promise to use tobacco settlement funds for tobacco prevention and other programs to improve health, Oklahomans have created an endowment to assure that funds will be available for these purposes for generations to come. More information can be found at [www.tset.ok.gov](http://www.tset.ok.gov).*

PHOTO OUTLINE: TSET recognizing the Lawton-Ft. Sill SWAT Team named national Youth Advocates of the Year by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids and state winners of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Champions of Health award. Back Row (left to right): Ken Rowe, outgoing TSET Board Chair; Shawn Bethel, MacArthur H.S.; Jessie Williams, MacArthur H.S.; Tracey Strader, TSET executive director; Front Row (left to right): Tomara Fizzell, MacArthur H.S.; Sarah Grimes, MacArthur H.S.; Alexsas Rhodes, Lawton H.S.; Chantal Rollerson, Eisenhower H.S.