

Ada awarded \$100,000 grant from TSET

OKLAHOMA CITY — The Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust board of directors approved more than \$1 million in grants to 21 cities that have implemented policies and strategies that work to increase healthy opportunities for residents at their board meeting in February.

Ada has been awarded a gold level grant of \$100,000, thanks to the hard work of Randy McFarlin, Ada Parks and Public Facilities director, Cheryl Christopher, Ada Parks administrative secretary, and Angela Harjo, tobacco prevention coordinator at the Pontotoc County Health Department, along with the STOP Tobacco Coalition of Pontotoc County.

The TSET board awarded the community grants as part of the TSET Healthy Communities Incentive Grant Program at a Feb. 20 board meeting in Oklahoma City.

TSET offers incentive grants to eligible communities that have met criteria established for the program such as tobacco-free policies, availability of fresh fruits and vegetables and increasing opportunities for residents to become more physically active.

To be eligible to apply communities must first have been recognized through the Certified Healthy Oklahoma program, a partnership between the Oklahoma Academy for State Goals, the Oklahoma Turning Point Council, the State Chamber and the Oklahoma State Department of Health.

TSET's incentive grant funding for communities is based on population size and the types of strategies implemented. Cities that have met TSET's criteria and been awarded a grant are able to determine how the incentive funding will be used to promote health in their communities. Grant funds are frequently used to leverage other funds for community projects that advance health.

The communities awarded grants last week will use the funds for a variety of health-promoting projects that will benefit residents. Some of the projects include developing community parks, walking trails, sidewalk master plans and adding enhancements to playgrounds or parks.

Since the Healthy Communities Incentive Grant program began three years ago, \$1.5 million in grant funds have been awarded to 42 communities.

"We are thrilled to offer incentives to cities and towns that have taken action to improve health in their communities," said Tracey Strader, TSET executive director. "Working together we can make the healthy choice, the easy choice, where Oklahomans live, work, learn and play."