

# Guymon DAILY HERALD

## Local coalition applauds tobacco ban

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Earlier this month, Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin authorized an executive order to ban tobacco use on all state property to “help contain the growth of increasing health care costs currently straining the budgets of families, businesses and state government.”

The order states, “Title 63 of the Oklahoma Statutes, Section 1-1523 prohibits smoking in all public places, in any indoor workplace and all vehicles owned by the State of Oklahoma and all of its agencies and instrumentalities.”

With Oklahoma ranked as the 48th unhealthiest state in the nation and extremely high rates of obesity and smoking related illness, Gov. Fallin reported these factors are costing billions of dollars in health care expenses and lost productivity.



The Texas County Coalition highly supports and applauds the Governor’s tobacco ban.

Communities of Excellence Grant Coordinator, Kayla McCarter said, “Gov. Mary Fallin’s Executive order to ban tobacco use on all state properties is a historic announcement that sets the state for continued proactive efforts to improve the health of Texas County residents.”

McCarter and the Coalition has been working toward changing the social norm of tobacco use and working with schools and businesses to adopt tobacco free policies. To date, the Texas County Family YMCA, Hardesty Public School District and the Guymon Public School District has passed tobacco free policies.

“We stand ready to assist in providing an local resources that will help state agencies implement this order in Texas County,” McCarter said. “We have a number of programs in place to inform and educate the public about the toll tobacco use takes on all Texas County residents and to provide cessation assistance, including passing Tobacco Free Policies and promoting the 1800QuitNOW help line.”

According to McCarter, tobacco use is Oklahoma’s leading cause of preventable death and the financial impact of tobacco is sobering.

“When it comes to secondhand smoke, there is no safe level of exposure. Even exposure to the lowest levels of secondhand smoke can increase the risk of heart attack or stroke,” McCarter said. “The annual health care cost in Oklahoma directly caused by smoking exceed \$1 billion annually. Each household pays about \$548 each year in state and federal taxes from smoking-caused government expenses, whether we smoke or not.”

The order to give state employees ample opportunity to take advantage of the cessation programs prior to implementation, the executive order will not take effect until July 1.