

## The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline and Red River Tobacco Education Consortium celebrate the Great American Smokeout

This Nov. 20, quit for a day, quit for life and celebrate the Great American Smokeout alongside the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline and the Red River Tobacco Education Consortium. This daylong event sponsored by the American Cancer Society encourages smokers and smokeless tobacco users to take the first steps toward quitting for good.

Tobacco use remains the leading preventable cause of death in the United States. In Oklahoma, smoking alone kills more than 6,200 adults each year and leaves tens of thousands suffering from diseases caused by smoking or secondhand smoke.

“The Great American Smokeout is a great way to stop smoking or dipping, even for one day, to make a fresh start,” said Tracey Strader, executive director of the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET). “You can talk with your doctor, call or register online with the Helpline, make a plan and go for it, for yourself, your family and friends, and your pocketbook.”

The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline is ready to help Oklahoma tobacco users begin their journey towards a healthier life during the Great American Smokeout. Specially trained Quit Coaches provide non-judgmental support for tobacco users and help them build personalized quit plans based on the best research available. Free quit coaching and free patches, gum or lozenges are available for all callers who qualify.

According to the American Cancer Society, health benefits start almost immediately after quitting smoking:

- Within 20 minutes of quitting, blood pressure decreases and pulse rate drops.
- Within eight hours of quitting, oxygen levels in the blood return to normal.
- Within 24 hours of quitting, chance of a heart attack decreases.
- Within 48 hours of quitting, ability to smell and taste is enhanced.
- Within three months of quitting, circulation and lung function improve.
- Within nine months of quitting, coughing, sinus congestion, wheezing, fatigue and shortness of breath decrease.
- Within one year of quitting, risk of coronary heart disease is lowered to half of that of a smoker.

“Quitting smoking is the most important thing you can do for your health, and yet one of the hardest things to do in life,” said Melissa Huff, R2TEC chairperson. “Once you make the decision to quit, you’ll feel better, you’ll have more money in your pocket and, most importantly, you will have more time to spend with loved ones.”

To connect with professional quit coaches from the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline call 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit [www.OKhelpline.com](http://www.OKhelpline.com). To learn more about the Great American Smokeout and for more information about the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline, visit [www.OKHelpline.com](http://www.OKHelpline.com).

The Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline is primarily funded by TSET, in partnership with the Oklahoma State Department of Health, Oklahoma Health Care Authority, Oklahoma Employees Group Insurance Division and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Connect with the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline through social media by liking the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline on Facebook or following @OKhelpline on Twitter. The Great American Smokeout participants are encouraged to use the hashtag #LIVewithoutIT.