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Northwestern campuses to become tobacco free on July 1

Beginning July 1, all Northwestern Oklahoma State University (NWOSU) campuses, as well as all property owned and leased by the university, will become tobacco-free areas.

NWOSU had been discussing becoming tobacco free for some time, but the conversations became moot when Gov. Mary Fallin issued an executive order in February prohibiting the use of tobacco products on state property.

We were certainly moving in the direction of addressing tobacco use on our campuses, but the Governor set a timeline that expedited the process, said Dr. Janet Cunningham, university president. There has been a lot of positive feedback from students and employees regarding the move to tobacco-free status.

Gov. Fallin's order prohibits the use of all tobacco products, including smokeless tobacco, on state-owned and state-leased property. This order would affect all buildings and property currently used by Northwestern, including its athletic venues.

For Northwestern, the challenge has been to provide cessation resources for students and employees who are tobacco users, and to develop procedures for enforcing the ban.

We understand the complexities of this issue, but Gov. Fallin's order was clear, and we will comply, Cunningham said. We are asking the cooperation of our students, employees and visitors to assist us in this transition into a tobacco-free institution.

Northwestern has established a website at www.nwosu.edu/tobacco-free to explain its tobacco free policies and provide cessation resources.

In addition, Northwestern is partnering with the Woods County Coalition and Northwest Family Services to assist in the tobacco-free effort. The coalition is providing tobacco-free signage for the campuses and will work with the institution to provide help in ending tobacco use by students and employees.

Northwestern will formally adopt its tobacco-free policies at a brief public ceremony at 10 a.m., Monday, June 25, outside of the north entrance to the J.W. Martin Library on the Alva campus.