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Section: Living

Local anti-tobacco coalition coordinator excited about new statewide media blitz

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Janie Horton, coordinator for the Carter County **Turning Point** Tobacco Coalition, not only had input into the development of the state's new anti-tobacco media campaign, but she also attended Monday's press conference at the State Capitol where it was officially launched.

"I'm very excited about it," she said Tuesday. "The campaign's theme, 'Tobacco Stops With Me,' is something that people will recognize."

The campaign was created specifically for Oklahomans and uses print, television, radio and billboard advertising, as well as an interactive Web Site, www.stopswithme.com, to support the benefits of a tobacco-free lifestyle. Online information includes how to quit, how to support someone who is trying to quit and what people can do to make the state a healthier place to live, work and learn. Horton said the media campaign will include money for newspaper, television and radio ads in Carter County.

"The ads are emotional and contain powerful messages," she said. "They are very well done."

The Tobacco Stops With Me campaign is funded by the Oklahoma Tobacco Settlement Endowment Trust (TSET), in collaboration with the state health department. The media campaign is the third phase of the state's plan to reduce tobacco use.

"Our first efforts were to establish the Oklahoma Tobacco Helpline and to fund key community-based programs across the state," said Kenneth Rowe, Chair of the TSET Board of Directors.

"The tobacco industry is still spending hundreds of millions each year to promote tobacco use in Oklahoma," said Tracey Strader, executive director of TSET. "We're all paying the price. Tobacco is Oklahoma's leading cause of preventable death, resulting in thousands of lives lost and more than \$2.7 billion in health care costs and lost productivity each year. It is time we all say 'Tobacco Stops With Me.'"

The money will pay for about six months of advertising. The \$1.5 million advertising campaign is planned as a three-year effort, first focusing on the problem of tobacco use and then taking a look at solutions. In the past, the state used advertising produced by other states.

The University of Oklahoma College of Public Health will evaluate the campaign.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.