

# The Ada News

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## [Local health department implements tobacco ban](#)

Ada — Michael Echelle, Pontotoc County Health Department administrator, Brandi McGhee, Pontotoc Turning Point representative and Kathy Wellington, Communities of Excellence Grant Coordinator join together in commending Gov. Mary Fallin's Executive Order to ban tobacco use on all state properties is a historic announcement that sets the stage for continued proactive efforts to improve the health of Pontotoc County residents.

"The Pontotoc County Health Department stands ready to assist in providing any local resources that will help state agencies implement this order in Pontotoc County," Echelle said.

Wellington said her organization has a number of programs in place to inform and educate the public about the toll tobacco use takes on all Pontotoc County residents. For more information about these resources, phone (580)332-2011 ext. 118.

Free cessation assistance for those ready to quit using tobacco can be obtained by calling the helpline at 1800QuitNow or visiting the helpline website.

"Tobacco use is Oklahoma's leading cause of preventable death," said Wellington. "And 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."

The financial impact of tobacco is equally sobering. "The annual health care costs in Oklahoma directly caused by smoking exceed \$1 billion annually," said Wellington. "Each household pays about \$548 each year in state and federal taxes from smoking-caused government expenses, whether we smoke or not."

Echelle said Pontotoc County Health Department and Pontotoc County Department of Human Services elected to have a tobacco-free campus when moving into their facilities in 2010. For more information about the governor's executive order banning tobacco use on all state properties, visit [www.health.ok.gov](http://www.health.ok.gov).