



For Immediate Release

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Mississippi Tobacco-Free Coalition of Rankin, Scott and Simpson Counties Encourages Smokers to Quit for a Day

The Mississippi Tobacco-Free Coalition of Rankin, Scott and Simpson Counties urges smokers to quit for 24 hours on November 17 to encourage them to kick the habit for good. This is part of the American Cancer Society's Great American Smokeout, an annual one-day event held the third Thursday of each November. Smokers are encouraged to quit for a day, and make a plan to quit for good.

To commemorate this year's Great American Smokeout, the Mississippi Tobacco-Free Coalition of Rankin, Scott and Simpson Counties will hold an event on November 17, 2011 at CRUDUP Ward Activity Center, Kiddie Kollege and several Scott County schools: Lake Middle and High School, Sebastopol Attendance Center and Scott Central School. Activities at the event include the youth making and hanging posters about how to quit, the QUITLINE information and tobacco facts.

"Through this Great American Smokeout event, we want Mississippians to know that you can quit and there is plenty of help available for those who want to stop smoking permanently," said Tawni Basden director of the Mississippi Tobacco Free Coalition of Rankin, Scott and Simpson Counties. "If you want to quit using tobacco, contact the Mississippi Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or www.QuitlineMS.com to receive free counseling and medications, such as the patch or nicotine gum."

According to Roy Hart, director of the Mississippi State Department of Health (MSDH) Office of Tobacco Control, "the addictive ingredient in tobacco is nicotine, and tobacco products, especially cigarettes, are carefully formulated by the tobacco industry to satisfy the brain's nicotine craving for about two hours. While some individuals are able to break this addiction cycle on their own, most benefit greatly from counseling, over the counter nicotine replacement therapy or prescription medications. The fact is, an individual is twice as likely to successfully quit smoking with help from the Mississippi Tobacco Quitline."

Basden says the Great American Smokeout Event on November 17 is a great opportunity for smokers to quit smoking and start on the path toward a healthier life.

"Make the decision to quit, and designate the Great American Smokeout on November 17 as your quit day," said Basden. "Let your friends, family and coworkers know that you plan to quit and ask for their support and understanding. Nicotine withdrawal can cause feelings of stress and anxiety, and having a support network around you can help."

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the United States. Each year in Mississippi, 4,700 adults die from smoking-related diseases, according to the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

For more information on your local Tobacco-Free Coalition, visit www.TobaccoFreeMS.org. For more information about the Mississippi Tobacco Quitline, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit www.QuitlineMS.com.