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The Great American Smokeout – November 16, 2017

Watseka, IL – The American Cancer Society’s Great American Smokeout will take place on Thursday, November 16, 2017. The goal of the event is to set aside a day to help smokers quit smoking or using tobacco products for at least one day with the hope that they will quit for good.

According to Chris Wisniewski, Tobacco Coordinator for the Iroquois County Public Health Department, “many smokers attempt to quit a number of times before they actually achieve quitting.” When a smoker calls the Quitline, they are connected with a medical professional who will assist them in their quit attempt. The medical professional will assist the caller by designing a quit program that meets the caller’s needs.

The idea of the Great American Smokeout began in 1971 when Arthur Mullaney, a Massachusetts resident, asked people to give up smoking for a day and to donate the money they would have spent on tobacco to a local high school. Others started promoting different variations of the ideas until The California chapter of the American Cancer Society encouraged nearly one million smokers to quit for the day on November 18, 1976. With the success achieved in California, the American Cancer Society took the event nationwide in 1977. Wisniewski said the Smokeout is held every year on the third Thursday of November.

Wisniewski said the American Cancer Society encourages smokers to quit by providing the smoker with information that will help them gain an understanding of the positive physical changes that will occur for the smoker once they quit. “Within 20 minutes of smoking their last cigarette, an individual will begin to see a series of changes that will continue for years....

- 20 minutes after quitting – your heart rate and blood pressure drops
- 12 hours after quitting – the amount of carbon monoxide in your blood drops to normal
- 2 weeks – 3 months after quitting – circulation improves and lung function increases
- 1 month to 9 months after quitting – your coughing and shortness of breath decrease
- 1 year after quitting – your risk of heart disease is half that of a smoker’s
- 2-5 years after quitting – your stroke risk is reduced to that of a nonsmoker’s

- 10 years after quitting – your lung cancer death rate is half that of a smoker's. Your risk of cancers of the mouth, throat, esophagus, bladder, kidney and pancreas decreases
- 15 years after quitting – your risk of heart disease is that of a non-smoker's

The Illinois Tobacco Quitline number is 1-866-QUIT-YES or 1-866-784-8937. Registered nurses, respiratory therapists, and certified tobacco-treatment counselors are on call 7 days a week, (7AM to 9PM Monday through Friday and 9AM to 5PM on both Saturday and Sunday). The Cancer Helpline is 1-800-227-2345