



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 16, 2011

The Great American Smokeout, Nov. 17
Health district encourages smokers to quit for one day

LAS VEGAS – The Great American Smokeout debuted in 1976 as an opportunity for smokers to give up the habit for just one day with hope the decision would lead to a permanent change. This year, the American Cancer Society has designated Thursday, Nov. 17 as the Great American Smokeout. The Southern Nevada Health District encourages smokers in the community to participate and to commit to a long-term plan to quit for good. For information about tobacco products, secondhand smoke, or to access downloadable No Smoking signs, contact the health district’s Office of Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, (702) 759-1270 or visit www.SNHD.info or www.GetHealthyClarkCounty.org

Smokers can contact the Nevada Tobacco Users’ Helpline at 1-800-QUIT NOW for free assistance to help them quit smoking. They can speak with a professional, licensed counselor for confidential assistance. Smokers can also visit the health district’s Get Healthy Clark County website, www.GetHealthyClarkCounty.org to find tips to help them quit smoking as well as additional resources.

Las Vegas resident, Vanessa Rapp was a decade-long smoker. She quit smoking in October 2010 and one month later, she contacted the Nevada Tobacco Users’ Helpline to help her learn to live tobacco free; her husband is currently working with helpline counselors to help him quit. “I feel a million times better,” she said when asked about her life now that she’s been tobacco free for a year. “My husband and I have kids and I know that they will be less likely to smoke because we’re not smoking.” She and her husband heard about the Tobacco Users’ Helpline from a convenience store clerk. “I had to learn coping skills. It was quite a bit of self-discovery. I learned why I smoked and how to live without it. It’s a very powerful addiction. And I am so proud that I was able to give it up.”

In Clark County, nearly eight of 10 residents are non-smokers. Within five years of kicking the habit, the risk of premature death is reduced by 50 percent and after 15 years the risk is the same as someone who never smoked. One of two smokers will die from a smoking-related illness. The average smoker will spend approximately \$1,000 annually on cigarettes.

-more-

Great American Smokeout – add one

The most effective way to quit smoking is to make a plan and get assistance to develop a strategy. Quitting tips include identifying triggers and habits, such as an ‘after dinner’ cigarette, driving, consuming alcohol or coffee. The American Cancer Society offers several tips to assist:

- Spend time in places where smoking is prohibited, especially the first few days after quitting
- Drink large quantities of water and fruit juice
- Avoid alcohol, coffee, and other beverages associated with smoking
- Eat several small meals to maintain blood sugar levels, avoid sugary or spicy foods that trigger a desire for cigarettes
- Take deep rhythmic breaths to relax
- Join a support group

In March 2010, the Southern Nevada Health District was awarded a two-year Communities Putting Prevention to Work grant in the amount of \$14.6 million for its Tobacco Control Program. A majority of the funding received has been distributed to previously identified community partners for programs to lessen and diminish the burden of tobacco use in Clark County. To date, nearly 20,000 Clark County residents contacted the health district’s smoking cessation partners as a result of grant-related activities.

The health district’s Tobacco Control Program has received recognition for its programs to reduce smoking rates in Southern Nevada. By using CDC’s Best Practices models, the Tobacco Control Program has developed activities and policy efforts that have contributed to a significant decrease in youth and adult smoking rates, expanded programs directed toward diverse communities, and increased knowledge of the dangers of secondhand smoke.

Updated information about the Southern Nevada Health District can be found on Facebook www.facebook.com/SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict, on YouTube www.youtube.com/SNHealthDistrict or Twitter www.twitter.com/SNHDinfo and www.GetHealthyClarkCounty.org. The health district is now available in Spanish on Twitter www.twitter.com/TuSNHD.