



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: March 17, 2014**

### **Kick Butts Day, March 19**

**LAS VEGAS** – It's time to kick some butt... Wednesday, March 19 is national Kick Butts Day, a nationwide initiative, sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids to stop tobacco use by children and young adults.

Every year the tobacco industry spends \$8.5 billion dollars to market its products. Locally, the tobacco industry spends \$74 million on advertising and sponsorships. The tobacco industry knows that 75 percent of teenagers shop at convenience stores at least once per week and a majority of the advertising budget goes into point-of-sale marketing to reach and influence the youth market.

To increase awareness of this issue, members of *Evolverment*, a tobacco prevention youth group, created a program called Counter Balance. Counter Balance is about protecting youth from being bombarded by tobacco ads in the community. Studies show that youth are more likely to use tobacco if they are constantly exposed to tobacco advertising. Students from various high schools mapped out the 1,200+ tobacco retail outlets in southern Nevada on an interactive map where users can discover tobacco retail store density in relation to their homes, parks, schools and day care centers. Tobacco retail density maps can be found at [counterbalancenv.com](http://counterbalancenv.com).

It is no accident that 85 percent of youth smokers prefer Marlboro, Camel and Newport, the three most heavily advertised brands. With little restrictions on tobacco industry marketing at the point-of-purchase, other tobacco products such as electronic cigarettes are now being heavily promoted at these locations. Evolverment's goal is to inform the community about the level of tobacco advertising in southern Nevada so the tobacco industry doesn't continue to gain more replacement smokers.

It is estimated that each day across the nation, over 3,000 children under the age of 18 will try their first cigarette while another 700 children who have already tried their first cigarette will become regular smokers. Each year, approximately 1,900 Nevadans under age 18 become daily smokers. About 80 percent of adult smokers became regular smokers before the age of 18. Health care costs are about \$1.8 billion for smoking-related illnesses and 3,300 Nevadans die from smoking-related illnesses each year.

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Kick Butts Day – add one

The health district's Tobacco Control Program combats youth tobacco use by developing programs that go beyond traditional methods, such as extensive social marketing programs, teen-focused counter-advertising activities, community outreach programs that reach into minority communities, and campaigns developed for alternative lifestyles. 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.

Smokers can contact the Nevada Tobacco Users' Helpline at 1-800-QUIT NOW for free assistance to help 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](http://www.GetHealthyClarkCounty.org) find tips to help quit smoking and additional resources.

Updated information about the Southern Nevada Health District can be found on Facebook [www.facebook.com/SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict](http://www.facebook.com/SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict), on YouTube [www.youtube.com/SNHealthDistrict](http://www.youtube.com/SNHealthDistrict) or Twitter: [www.twitter.com/SNHDInfo](http://www.twitter.com/SNHDInfo), Ez2stop: [www.twitter.com/ez2stop](http://www.twitter.com/ez2stop), or Get Healthy Clark County: [www.twitter.com/gethealthycc](http://www.twitter.com/gethealthycc). The health district is now available in Spanish on Twitter [www.twitter.com/TuSNHD](http://www.twitter.com/TuSNHD). Don't have a Twitter account? Follow the health district on your phone by texting "follow SNHDInfo" to 40404.