

MEDIA ADVISORY

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'TOBACCO ROAD' TAKES TURN TOWARD TOBACCO PREVENTION and CESSATION

Lt. Gov. Leads Culture Shift, Will Unveil North Carolina's Latest Initiatives During Great American Smokeout

RALEIGH, NC – North Carolina, a state rooted in the 'golden leaf,' has turned a new leaf. During the Great American Smokeout (Thurs., Nov. 17), state leaders will kick-off the latest in a series of groundbreaking efforts to raise a tobacco-free generation. In some ways, the state is now in the vanguard of prevention and cessation efforts, tackling emerging health issues related to tobacco rather than simply playing catch up.

Leading the charge is **Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue**, chair of the NC Health and Wellness Trust Fund (HWTF), who is passionate about the need "to get tobacco products away from our children and out of our schools," has already launched a hard-hitting TV campaign and a drive to make all of the state's schools 100 percent tobacco-free.

On **Thursday, Nov. 17**, from 10-11am, Lt. Gov. Perdue will join prominent educators, public health champions and college students at NC A&T State University in Greensboro to announce innovative additional steps, including:

- A mass e-mail campaign – including notes sent from Dr. William Roper, CEO of the University of North Carolina Health Care System — to drive college students to a new in-state Quitline. More than 115,000 students are expected to receive an informational e-mail.
- The nation's first formative research into how to effectively communicate tobacco cessation messages to college students. Researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill will lead the effort and use the results to shape future campaigns.
- A coordinated, statewide series of events trumpeting the Great American Smokeout.

Lt. Gov. Perdue will be available for interviews from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. on Nov. 17. Contact Alison McLaurin at 919-733-4009 or Alison.McLaurin@ncmail.net to arrange for an interview.

In October, Lt. Gov. Perdue expanded the state's award-winning TV campaign to include a graphic spot on the hazards of using spit tobacco. The ad, among the first in the nation to take on rising rates of spit tobacco use, aired across the state during the World Series. "North Carolina is one of the states taking the lead in educating young people that spit tobacco is not a safe alternative to smoking cigarettes," said Paul Turner, the former director of Oral Health America's (OHA) National Spit Tobacco Education Program (NSTEP) who now heads up the NC Spit Tobacco Education Program. To view this ad and others, please visit www.HealthWellNC.com.

These efforts have inspired both praise and surprise. The national Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids recognized North Carolina in December 2004 as one of the most improved states in funding prevention programs. Meanwhile, many observers have noted the sharp decline in the status of tobacco products, once Carolina royalty.

In June, an editorial writer at *The Winston-Salem Journal* reflected, "Many of us are tied to tobacco ...Tobacco helped build this newspaper and many other community institutions. Heck, even the school system itself gets strong support from Reynolds American. And everybody, even the folks at Reynolds, knows that the pendulum is swinging hard against tobacco. Change is coming." Actually, it's already here.