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MEDIA ADVISORY

MINNESOTA RETAILERS TO BLACK OUT TOBACCO ADS FOR THE GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT ON NOVEMBER 19

26 Tobacco retailers in 11 counties across Minnesota will encourage people to Start Noticing tobacco advertisements and their influence on local youth

WHO: *Start Noticing*, a coalition of two public health organizations and one joint powers agreement, that works with youth, parents, local community leaders and retailers to educate people to start noticing tobacco advertising and its effect on youth.

WHAT: On November 19, communities across the country will be participating in the Great American Smokeout, an event sponsored by the American Cancer Society, which encourages all smokers to quit smoking for one day. The hope is that participation will not only raise awareness of the issue, but also inspire people to kick the habit for good.

In recognition of the Great American Smokeout[®], *Start Noticing* will be joining forces with local tobacco retailers to reduce the influence of tobacco advertising on youth in our community. Twenty-six local tobacco retailers will be blacking out all tobacco advertisements to raise awareness of the number of tobacco ads youth see every time they visit a store. A complementary social media effort will also be taking place. Youth and supporters of *Start Noticing* will be using a blacked out profile picture and status message on Facebook to create buzz about this issue.

WHERE: Cottonwood, Fillmore, Freeborn, Houston, Jackson, Mower, Northwest Hennepin, Olmsted, Redwood, Wabasha and Winona counties

WHEN: November 19, 2009

WHY: Tobacco use is a very serious health issue affecting our community. *Start Noticing* confronts the tobacco industry at the place where they can influence youth openly and often: the place where tobacco is sold. While it may seem harmless, research has demonstrated that this type of advertising is particularly effective in influencing youth tobacco usage.

- Each day in the United States, 4,000 young people between 12 and 17 start smoking cigarettes.¹
- On average, teens visit convenience stores at least twice per week. Weekly or frequent exposure to retail tobacco marketing is associated with a 50 percent

¹ SAMHSA, *Results from the 2007 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, Detailed Tables*.
<http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/NSDUH/2k7NSDUH/tabs/Sect4peTabs10to11.pdf>.

increase in the odds of ever smoking.²

- 90% of smokers start smoking before they turn 18.³
- Increasing the number of youth using tobacco is important to tobacco companies because they need new people to replace their other customers who are dying.
- Addiction to tobacco contributes to more than four million deaths worldwide.⁴
- The state of Minnesota spends more than \$2 billion a year on tobacco related health costs.⁵

VISUAL: Photos of the blacking out of tobacco ads would offer a great visual representation for people to Start Noticing tobacco advertising and its negative influence on youth.

Participating retailers include:

- Brooklyn Center Liquor (Xerxes Ave)
- Brooklyn Center Liquor (Brooklyn Blvd)
- Brooklyn BP (Brooklyn Center)
- Express BP (Jackson)
- Expressway (Sanborn)
- Hage Oil (Lakefield)
- Hometown Market (Crystal)
- Hy-Vee (Windom)
- Jackson Municipal Liquor (Jackson)
- Maynard's (Westbrook)
- Meadowland (Lamberton)
- Meadowland (Wabasso)
- Okabena Municipal Liquor (Okabena)
- PJ's (Heron Lake)
- Salfer's (Wabasso)
- Sunshine Foods (Windom)
- Value Food (Brooklyn Center)
- Wayne's C-Store (Morgan)

Additional participating retailers may be announced on Thursday.

² Henriksen, L, et al., "Association of Retail Tobacco Marketing with Adolescent Smoking," *AJPH* 94(12): 8-10, December 2004.

³ SAMHSA, Calculated based on data in 2006 *National Household Survey on Drug Use and Health*, <http://www.oas.samhsa.gov/nsduh.htm>.

⁴ World Health Organization, *World Health Report 1999* (Geneva: WHO, 1999) <http://www.who.int/whr/1999/en/report.htm> and World Bank, *World Development Indicators 1998*, http://www.worldbank.org/data/wdi/pdfs/tab2_1.pdf

⁵ Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota. *Health Care Costs and Smoking – The Bottom Line*. 2005.