Make a Commitment to Quit Smoking with the Great American Smokeout®

American Cancer Society marks 35th Great American Smokeout

ATLANTA – November 9, 2010 – In preparation for the Great American Smokeout on Thursday, November 18, the American Cancer Society encourages smokers to put their health first by making a commitment to quit smoking for good. At www.cancer.org/Smokeout, the American Cancer Society helps with that commitment by providing smokers online resources and tools such as a guide to quitting smoking; desktop helpers such as the quit-clock and crave button, and support from trained counselors through the American Cancer Society Quit For Life® program operated and managed by Free & Clear® at 1-800-227-2345.

According to an American Cancer Society report , smokers who quit can expect to live as many as ten years longer than those who continue to smoke; and smokers who quit, regardless of age, live longer than people who continue to smoke. Research shows that much of the risk of premature death from smoking could be prevented by quitting. Smokers who quit reduce their risk of lung cancer – ten years after quitting, the lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker's – and lower their risk for other major diseases including heart disease and stroke.

"Quitting smoking is a very important step in reducing cancer risk, as tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and death in the U.S.," said Edward Partridge, M.D., national volunteer president for the American Cancer Society. "The American Cancer Society Great American Smokeout is a great first step for smokers to take charge of their health by quitting or making a plan to quit, and the Society can help smokers through a variety of resources including personalized telephone coaching by trained specialists."

The American Cancer Society created the trademarked concept for and held its first Great American Smokeout in 1976 as a way to inspire and encourage smokers to quit for a day. One million people quit smoking for a day at the 1976 event in California. The Great American Smokeout encourages smokers to commit to making a long-term plan to quit smoking for good.

Important facts about tobacco use:
o Tobacco use remains the world's most preventable cause of death.
o Cigarette smoking accounts for about 443,000 premature deaths – including 49,400 in nonsmokers.
o Thirty percent of cancer deaths, including 87 percent of lung cancer deaths, can be attributed to smoking.
o Smoking accounts for more than $193 billion in health care expenditures and productivity losses annually.

About the American Cancer Society
The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end suffering from cancer. As a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers, we fight for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. We save lives by helping people stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early; helping people get well by being there for them during and after a cancer diagnosis; by finding cures through investment in groundbreaking discovery; and by fighting back by rallying lawmakers to pass laws to defeat cancer and by rallying communities worldwide to join the fight. As the nation's largest non-governmental investor in cancer research, contributing more than $3.5 billion, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, about 11 million people in America who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will be celebrating birthdays this year. To learn more about us or to get help, call us any time, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

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