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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: NAME AND INFO HERE

_____ **County selected as participant in a State Tobacco Use Prevention**

Program

DATELINE HERE - School Systems in nine Tennessee counties are partnering with the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and the Tennessee Department of Health in an effort to decrease the use of tobacco by high school students. Student Tobacco Outreach Prevention or STOP is funded by the Department of Health through a grant to THEC. The nine counties participating in STOP are Campbell, Cocke, Grundy, Hardeman, Johnson, Lake, Meigs, Union, and Wayne.

The STOP program has the full support of school superintendents and school leaders.

“(Quote from LEA with name, etc., here _____).”

Each county has a county coordinator for the STOP program. _____ (coordinator name here) will serve as _____ County’s coordinator. Through a network of community, health, and school organizations _____ (name) will work to implement specific activities in the schools that will discourage students from using tobacco products.

“(Possible Quote from Coordinator here.)”

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The STOP program works in conjunction with other anti-tobacco use initiatives, such as those introduced by the county Coordinated School Health office, (please fill in others)_____. Examples of _____ County STOP activities are: _____.

All STOP activities are evaluated, and their effectiveness is measured. One important byproduct of the STOP program will be student survey data on attitudes and tobacco use practices. Because this information is not currently available, these survey results will serve as a foundation against which to measure change.

The nine counties in the STOP program are the same nine counties served by THEC's GEAR UP TN, a federal six-year grant program. The goal of GEAR UP TN is to increase the number of students from the nine counties who complete high school and participate in higher education.

While GEAR UP TN and the STOP program have separate funding sources, their goals are highly complementary. Promoting educational attainment goes hand in hand with promoting better health choices.

Middle Tennessee State University's Center for Health and Human Services, the University of Tennessee's Institute for Assessment and Evaluation, and East Tennessee State University's College of Public Health are THEC partners in this important program. The goal of the coalition is to support county schools and local communities in establishing programs for tobacco use prevention and cessation among youth and their families.

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