

For more information:  
Lynda Lehing  
Director of Tobacco Prevention  
and Education  
Department of Health and  
Human Services  
(501) 661-2231

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Arkansas Celebrities Help Spread the Stamp Out Smoking Message

LITTLE ROCK, AR (November 6, 2006) –World Middleweight Champion and Arkansas native Jermain Taylor welcomes other Arkansas celebrities in spreading the Stamp Out Smoking message. Actress Mary Steenburgen and comedian James “Lil’ JJ” Lewis have joined Jermain in informing Arkansans about the dangers of tobacco usage and secondhand smoke.

Jermain, considered by many in the world of boxing as a true gentleman, first joined the Stamp Out Smoking campaign in July 2004, and is still a positive role model for the campaign. Taylor has been featured in print and television ads and has received positive reception from many Arkansans. As SOS continued utilizing the appeal of Jermain Taylor, Tobacco Prevention and Education Program members decided to seek the influence of other well-known Arkansans to join the Stamp Out Smoking Celebrity Campaign.

Mary Steenburgen, Academy Award-winning actress, Arkansas native and wife of actor Ted Danson, soon joined the campaign with her own personal story about the

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dangers of spit tobacco. Mary's father, like many Arkansans, believed that spit tobacco is a safe alternative to smoking; however, he soon learned that his belief was not at all true, and he eventually died from cancer. Mary urges Arkansans to stay away from all forms of tobacco, including spit, and to call the Quitline if they are current users and need help quitting.

Comedian James "Lil' JJ" Lewis is a well-known comedian and has been featured on BET, Nickelodeon, NBC's *The Tonight Show*, the MGM film *Beauty Shop* and most recently with Wayne Brady in *Crossover*, a movie about the competitive world of street basketball. Lil' JJ talks about the negative aspects of tobacco usage, such as stained teeth and bad breath, and encourages Arkansans to quit using tobacco.

The celebrity TV and print ads can be viewed at [www.stampoutsmoking.com](http://www.stampoutsmoking.com).

"Our goal is multi-fold," says Lynda Lehing, Director of Tobacco Prevention and Education. "We want to first encourage Arkansans to not smoke. We also want to use some of our own homegrown celebrities to attract attention to our ads. Additionally, we want to use a variety of celebrities to appeal to a broad audience of different ages and races."

The ads are one portion of the entire Stamp Out Smoking campaign that uses print, TV, radio, Internet and outdoor billboards to spread messages about the dangers

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of tobacco products to the users and to those around them. Among other programs are those that specifically target minority markets, prevention ads that target youth and ads addressing secondhand smoke.

Reports from the Department of Health and Human Services show that 95 Arkansans die each week from causes related to smoking, and approximately 550 people die every year from exposure to secondhand smoke. Twenty-four percent of all adult Arkansans smoke, and 26% of high school teens in Arkansas are smokers. Smokeless tobacco poses a problem as well, with 24.2% of all male high school students reporting regular use.

Recently, Arkansas legislators took great strides to prevent Arkansans from the danger of secondhand smoke by passing the Clean Indoor Air Act, which prohibits smoking in most public places. To learn more about the Arkansas Clean Indoor Air Act, visit [arcleanair.com](http://arcleanair.com). If you or a loved one currently uses tobacco, Arkansas tobacco settlement dollars will pay for a proven program to help you quit. For more information call 1-866-NOW-QUIT or visit [stampoutsmoking.com](http://stampoutsmoking.com).

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