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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **TENNESSEANS JOIN SMOKE-FREE MOVEMENT**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. -- In 2006, the U.S. Surgeon General left no doubt about the serious risks of secondhand smoke. Non-smokers nationally and worldwide are responding in great numbers to the numerous reports on the dangers of secondhand smoke.

In Tennessee, more than 73% of registered voters in Tennessee either strongly or somewhat favor a statewide smoke-free law that would make all workplaces smoke-free. In the U.S. cigarette smoking is down XX percent in the last XX years.

All this leads to Governor Bredesen's introduction of a comprehensive smoke-free workplace in the Tennessee General Assembly (HB2336 and SB 2255) that will eliminate secondhand smoke in all workplaces in Tennessee.

In anticipation of the legislation being widely supported by Tennesseans, restaurant owners are hearing the smoke-free message directly from their customers and acting early, making the switch to non-smoking environments. Recently, Memphis's world famous Rendezvous Restaurant, Nashville's Sperry's steakhouse, and Knoxville's Connors restaurants have recently made the decision to stop all smoking in their buildings.

Many early smoke-free pioneers are happy to see that everyone is finally catching on. Amy Kurland of Nashville's Bluebird Café has been smoke-free for more than 10 years. Kurland says she made the decision for health reasons.

"Because of our decision to go smoke-free several years ago, the Bluebird is a better live-music venue today," said Kurland. "The decision allowed us to grow a different kind of business. We have great customers now. Better customers, I think. Now that we are

smoke-free we appeal to a wider audience because the older, more prosperous crowd can also enjoy our facility.”

Once the legislation passes the General Assembly, Tennessee would be added to the long list of states that have extensive non-smoking laws in place including California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Maine, Massachusetts, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Washington. Arizona, Montana, Puerto Rico and Utah all have more smoke-free legislation scheduled to go into effect in the coming two years.

Worldwide, whole countries such as England, France, Ireland, Italy, Norway and Scotland have passed smoke-free legislation.

The Campaign for a Healthy and Responsible Tennessee (CHART) is the statewide coalition working to protect Tennesseans from the dangerous effects of tobacco through public education and grassroots mobilization. Smoke-Free Tennessee is a campaign of the CHART and over 20 partners dedicated to creating smoke-free workplaces for all Tennesseans. Learn more about Smoke-Free Tennessee at [www.smokefreetn.org](http://www.smokefreetn.org). More information about CHART can be found at [www.tnchart.org](http://www.tnchart.org).

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