



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
Thursday, November 8, 2001

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UDOH's Youth Coalition Urges Peers to "Take Command of the Airwaves" by Entering Anti-Tobacco Advertising Contest

(Salt Lake City, UT) - The Utah Department of Health's Phoenix Alliance youth advocacy group is launching the fifth annual Truth From Youth Anti-tobacco Advertising Contest on Thursday Nov. 8. They are urging Utah's young people to "take command of the airwaves" by creating radio, TV and billboard ads that counter the tobacco industry's manipulation of the media.

The health department is distributing thousands of contest information packets and posters this month to every teacher in the state. Phoenix Alliance members statewide will make anti-tobacco presentations to schools and youth groups to encourage contest participation.

Utah youth ages 5 to 18 may enter the contest by creating anti-tobacco radio, TV or billboard ads. Entries are grouped in elementary, junior and senior high school categories with cash prizes of \$300 for first place, \$200 for second and \$100 for third. Contest deadline is March 22, 2002. Best of contest winners will receive \$400 and have the opportunity to help produce their ads, which will be shown in May 2002.

According to Alec Day, Phoenix Alliance member, "The contest theme is 'The Airwaves are Yours to Command,' and we are doing just that by publicizing the contest and educating the public about the methods the tobacco industry uses to promote smoking." "Tobacco firms can no longer advertise cigarettes on television, but they continue to target youth in many ways," said Day. "The industry sponsors high-profile concerts and extreme sporting events, distributing free merchandise with weak anti-tobacco messages that actually promote tobacco use and advertise tobacco name brands.

"We continue to see celebrities smoking in movies with name-brand tobacco products clearly visible. Tobacco companies also place ads in magazines that a lot of teens read and provide point-of-purchase signs for convenience stores that youth go to. The industry spends \$8.24 billion per year on advertising and marketing. The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Youth estimates that \$65 million in advertising is placed yearly in Utah."

Day added that participating in the Anti-tobacco Advertising Contest is one way that young people can fight back against this media manipulation. For more information about the contest or the Phoenix Alliance call 1-801-256-4924 or visit the web site at www.youthagainsttobacco.com.

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