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SOS ANNOUNCES “THE BIG PITCH FILM FESTIVAL”

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Jan. 13, 2012) – Stamp Out Smoking announced today its ninth annual Drama Contest, which will be titled "The Big Pitch Film Festival." The contest invites students to film, star in and produce their own TV commercials. All middle, junior and high school students in Arkansas are eligible to create a 27-second commercial that expresses their creativity and showcases their talent while promoting a tobacco-free lifestyle. Students will compete for the opportunity to win exciting prizes for themselves, and money to buy new video equipment for their schools. This contest is an essential tool to educate Arkansas youth about the dangers of tobacco use.

Again this year, SOS will host a private event to screen qualifying commercials and present awards to contest winners. There will be a first-, second-, and third- place winner in the competition, and the “People’s Choice” award returns for a fifth year, after nearly 5,500 votes were cast to select last year’s winner. In 2011, SOS introduced four new placement categories, which will be included again this year – Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Editing and Rookie of the Year, awarded to a first-time participant school. New to the 2012 contest is the "Best Representation of Topic" award. The video entry from the first-place winner is considered for professional production and airing in the SOS statewide media campaign.

“The Big Pitch Film Festival” challenges students to work with their peers by recruiting team members, researching the health hazards of tobacco, determining the best messaging strategy, and putting it all together in a 27-second commercial. An out-of-state panel of judges will determine the winners, and all eligible participants will be invited to the private screening event to see their finished products. Details for the event will be distributed to qualified participants after submissions are received.

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Contest guidelines and details can be found on stampoutsmoking.com. In order to be considered, entries for the contest must be postmarked by Feb. 29. Voting for the "People's Choice" award will be available beginning March 14 and ending April 11, and all winners will be announced on stampoutsmoking.com by 5 p.m. on April 16.

Prizes for the contest will be awarded as follows:

- Winning school will receive a **\$2,000 in-store credit** for media equipment or supplies and a **\$50 iTunes gift card** for each student on the team, up to six team members.
- Second place will receive a **\$1,000 in-store credit** for media equipment or supplies and a **\$25 iTunes gift card** for each student on the team, up to six team members.
- Third place will receive a **\$500 in-store credit** for media equipment or supplies and a **\$15 iTunes gift card** for each student on the team, up to six team members.
- People's Choice winning team will receive a **\$25 iTunes gift certificate** for each student on the team, up to six team members.
- Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Editing, Rookie of the Year and Best Representation of Topic will be awarded trophies and recognized along with other winners at the screening event.

"The Big Pitch Film Festival" drama contest is a tobacco prevention program for the SOS media and public education campaign. For official entry forms or more information on "The Big Pitch Film Festival," contact Allison Lafargue at allison.lafargue@cjr.com or (501) 975-7253. For additional information on other tobacco prevention programs in your area, contact the Arkansas Department of Health Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program office at (501) 661-2362 or visit stampoutsmoking.com. For a program to help you quit tobacco, call 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

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