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FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE:

GREAT AMERICAN SMOKEOUT- NOVEMBER 20, 2003

The American Cancer Society's 27th annual Great American Smokeout is scheduled for November 20th, the third Thursday of this month. The event is held annually to help millions of Americans quit smoking by encouraging them to quit for a day and is intended to "*get the ball rolling*" for a smoke-free lifetime.

In the United States alone smoking:

- causes nearly one in five deaths
- claims more than 400,000 lives each year
- has caused at least one serious illness in about 8.6 million people

In addition, smoking is attributable to:

- many chronic ailments including heart disease, lung cancer and emphysema
- reducing the life expectancy by an average of 12 to 15 years
- 26,000 new cases each year of childhood asthma due to children inhaling the second-smoke.

In support of the Great American Smokeout the American Cancer Society, the St. Joseph County Tobacco Reduction Action Coalition and the Branch and Hillsdale County Tobacco Reduction Action Coalition will be encouraging area restaurants and worksites to go "smoke free" for the day. Make sure you partner with these organizations by patronizing a participating restaurant, in your area, or by remaining smoke-free at work on this very important day.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!

For further information or to find out which local restaurants will be going smoke-free, for the day, contact your local American Cancer Society or the Branch, Hillsdale and St. Joseph Tobacco Reduction Action Coalition, Coordinator at 517-279-9561 ext. 123 or logon to www.bhsj.org .