



A FIRST BREATH SUCCESS STORY



By Stan Milam

PHILLIPS – The thought of inhaling mothballs was just too much for Lynda Smith. Smith, 35, is married and the mother of a 5-year old daughter, Olivia. She's going to have a son February 20.

Smith started smoking cigarettes when she was 13. She smoked a pack a day until June, when she started working with Janet Weber, the Public Health nurse at the Price County Health Department.

Weber runs the First Breath program. One of the ways that she helps is to tell pregnant women who smoke about chemicals and drugs contained in tobacco products.

"Janet really gave me a lot of information, but the thing that really hit home with me was all the stuff in a cigarette," Smith said. "I was also surprised to learn that all of the things that can happen to various parts of your body when you smoke."

Smith has cut back and is smoking only half as much as she did when she started working with Weber and First Breath.

"I'm down to about 10 cigarettes a day, but it's very difficult to stop altogether," Smith said. "It's getting a little easier. I don't just sit around and wait until it's time to have another one, so I'm now a little more relaxed with it."

Smith said that the "goodies" handed out as support gifts are also helpful.

"They are our rewards, or incentives I guess you could call them, for cutting back," she said. "It's nice to get a movie pass or a coupon for the grocery store."

Smith is a typical success story, Weber said.

"We know that everyone who comes through here is not going to stop smoking right away," Weber said. "But, it's our job to make sure everyone has all the information they need to make a smart decision."

"That's what Lynda has done," Weber said. "She's cut back a lot, and she knows that it will be even better if she can quit altogether."

Weber said that the 5A's Rule works better than constant pressuring and nagging.

"You ask, advise, assess, assist and arrange," Weber said. "First Breath has made that a lot easier for us."