



news **release**



Arkansas Department of Health
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Winners of the 2008 Blue & You Fitness Challenge
receive awards for top performance in contest;
surgeon general makes special presentation**

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (July 9, 2008) — The commitments were “cast,” the steps were taken and eight groups took home top awards today as winners of the 2008 Blue & You Fitness Challenge during ceremonies held at the Statehouse Convention Center in downtown Little Rock.

This is the fifth year for the Blue & You Fitness Challenge (formerly the Arkansas Fitness Challenge), an exercise contest held annually March 1 through May 31. In addition to the Challenge hosts – Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield, the Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) and the Department of Human Services (DHS), representatives from other companies, organizations and state agencies statewide — and outside of Arkansas — joined in the competition and were recognized at the awards ceremonies (a complete list of companies/groups follows).

“Red, White, Blue & You: Commit to 92!” was the rally cry of the crowd as they figuratively hit the campaign trail for fitness in March to promote wellness in the community and at the worksite.

“A total of 113 groups representing large and small companies, banks, schools and universities, physician offices, churches, hospitals and state agencies made fitness their ‘platform’ in the

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Challenge this year,” said Sharon Allen, team champion for Arkansas Blue Cross. “The 10,361 individuals participating in those groups logged 442,931 checkpoints (up from 299,787 checkpoints in 2007) during the contest! To log a checkpoint, participants exercised at least 30 minutes, which translates – at a minimum – to 221,465.5 hours of exercise during the Challenge (up from 149,893.5 hours of exercise in 2007! That’s a lot of movement!”

Four measures determined the winners of the Challenge: 1 – Goal Participation (percentage of participants meeting/exceeding 30 checkpoints; 35 points); 2 – Exercise Frequency (average number of checkpoints per participant; 35 points); 3 – Overall Participation (percent of eligible population participating; 20 points); and 4 – Persistency Rate (lowest rate of nonstarters; 10 points). The highest scoring group on a single item earned the points assigned to that measure and was the “winner” of that measure. The group earning the most cumulative points was declared the overall winner (in each group size category).

Winners of the 2008 Blue & You Fitness Challenge are:

Group Category 1 (2-9 participants)

The Source — Jonesboro, Arkansas

Group Category 2 (10-14 participants)

Empty Nesters — Maumelle, Arkansas

Group Category 3 (15-24 participants)

Arkansas Diamonds — Hot Springs Village, Arkansas

Group Category 4 (25-49 participants)

Consolidated Youth Services, Inc. — Jonesboro, Arkansas

Group Category 5 (50-99 participants)

Northrop Grumman CEO — St. Charles, Missouri

Group Category 6 (100-349 participants)

Lawrence Health Services — Walnut Ridge, Arkansas

Group Category 7 (350-899 participants)

Eastern Arkansas Senior Centers — 14 Eastern Region Counties

Group Category 8 (900+ participants)

Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield

The logging activity of Blue & You Fitness Challenge participants who were exercising five days or more a week also was provided in a weekly report to a national contest, which helped **move Arkansas from 23rd place to finish second** in the nation in the President’s Challenge for 2008! Joe

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Thompson, M.D., surgeon general of Arkansas, made a special appearance at the wrap-up rally to congratulate Blue & You Fitness Challenge participants for their role in helping Arkansas finish strong in that contest.

“In March, I issued a challenge to organizations in Arkansas to enroll in the national President’s Challenge,” said Thompson. “The President’s Challenge is a six-week physical activity challenge to get America moving — 30 minutes a day, five days a week from March 20 through May 15, 2008. You heeded the call. As the Blue & You Fitness Challenge already was in progress when the President’s Challenge began, contest organizers arranged for the exercise logged in the Blue & You Fitness Challenge to count toward the President’s Challenge for each state represented in the database. Providing the Blue & You Fitness Challenge participants’ activity data each week no doubt helped Arkansas finish as a top five state in the national President’s Challenge. Other top-five finishers were (Alaska, Wyoming, D.C. and Maryland). Plus, those participants in other states helped raise the activity levels there. A round of applause is due all the Blue & You Fitness Challenge participants committed to exercising five times per week during the contest.”

In addition to being recognized as top achievers, Blue & You Fitness Challenge participants reaped health and fitness rewards.

“The first four years of the Challenge yielded great results for the participants involved,” said John Selig, director of DHS. “This year was no exception and with the online survey offered through the contest Web site, we have even more comprehensive data. A total of 2,748 contest participants completed the evaluation – a statistically significant sample – and reported improved fitness levels. Almost 85 percent of respondents said they reached their personal goals through the Challenge.”

The following percentage of survey respondents indicated their levels of exercise below:

Beginning of Contest	End of Contest
17.7 percent exercised 0 days per week	.5 percent exercised 0 days per week
26.9 percent exercised 1 day per week	2.4 percent exercised 1 day per week
31.9 percent exercised 3 days per week	35.7 percent exercised 3 days per week
15.2 percent exercised 5 days per week	35.1 percent exercised 5 days per week
8.3 percent exercised every day	26.2 percent exercised every day

Of the respondents, 24.6 percent said they reached their personal goal to “begin exercising;”

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52.5 percent of respondents said they reached their goal to “increase exercising;” and 28.3 percent to “lose weight.”

Respondents also indicated they had lowered their systolic and diastolic blood pressure (80 respondents) , cholesterol levels (33 respondents), weight (424 respondents), and blood sugar (35 respondents) during the contest. Ninety-eight percent said they will participate in future programs like the Blue & You Fitness Challenge.

“According to the 2007 BRFSS data, in the adult population in Arkansas 65.6 percent report being overweight or obese – 28.1 percent (three out of every 10 adults) say they never get any exercise,” said Paul Halverson, Dr.PH, ADH director of health. “We are seeing tremendous increases in type 2 diabetes in children. This is diabetes caused by being overweight, and we normally don’t see this disease in our kids. The cost in treating diseases that result from these health risks, like heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes — preventable diseases — is skyrocketing. We are looking at a serious public health epidemic and a potential perfect storm as overweight baby boomers age and become ill. And yet, 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise five or more days a week can reduce so many of these risks. Programs like the Blue & You Fitness Challenge make positive steps toward turning the trend. In short, exercise is the Fountain of Youth. I know the Blue & You Fitness Challenge made me commit to keeping exercise a part of my daily life, and I encourage all Arkansans to do the same.”

“We started and ended the 2008 contest in the Natural State, but we took a virtual tour of our great nation this year, exercising from sea to shining sea,” Allen said. “We had participants from 36 states in 2008 with groups ranging in size from 2 to 1,295 participants. Participants told us that the Challenge inspired them to quit smoking, eat better, lose weight, get the family involved, even participate in activities they never dreamed they could. Our desire is to meet people right where they are and get them started down the road to better health, better self-esteem and a better life. You don’t have to be a fitness fanatic; we just want to make some movement – literally and figuratively – toward better health.”

The Blue & You Fitness Challenge was started in 2004 by Arkansas Blue Cross and the former Arkansas Department of Health to encourage employees to work toward the public health

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recommendation of adult physical activity 30 minutes each day, most days of the week. The name of the contest changed for 2008, as did the route that participants virtually travel online each time they complete and log 30 minutes of exercise in a day. The Fitness Challenge had generated interest from Arkansas companies that have employees located in other parts of the country as well as piqued interest from companies and groups in other states, so the contest was expanded this year. The contest started in Little Rock — where the Fitness Challenge all began — then virtually moved back and forth across America through all of the state capitals, many national parks and some interesting places in between (92 total checkpoints), then finished in Hot Springs, Arkansas.

For more information about the Blue & You Fitness Challenge, log on to www.BlueAndYouFitnessChallenge-ark.com. To help companies prepare for their own competitions, an Employee Fitness Contest Kit, a complete guide to organizing an employee competition, is available free by calling: 1-800-686-2609 (Arkansas Blue Cross) or stopping by the nearest Arkansas Blue Cross office.

The Kit may be downloaded as PDFs at any one of the following Web sites:

- www.ArkansasBlueCross.com (click on “Employers” tab, then the Kit logo)
- www.HealthAdvantage-hmo.com (click on “Employers” tab, then the Kit logo)
- www.BlueAdvantageArkansas.com (click on “Employers” tab, then the Kit logo)

Founded in 1948, Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield, an Independent Licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, is the largest health insurer in Arkansas, serving approximately one-third of the fully insured market. Arkansas Blue Cross and its affiliates have more than 2,500 employees. If combined, the 39 independent, locally operated Blue Cross and Blue Shield Plans collectively provide health-care coverage for 93 million — nearly one in three — Americans.

The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) is a centralized health department, operating local health units in each of the state’s 75 counties. County governments provide facilities and support for the clinical, environmental and home health services offered by the agency. The mission of the Department is to promote public health policies and practices that assure a healthy quality of life for Arkansans. ADH works to protect, improve and promote the health of all Arkansans with the

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support of more than 5,000 dedicated employees and public and private partners. During each year, Department employees monitor and investigate public health diseases and threats, provide preventive and personal health services in clinical and in-home settings, provide education and enforce laws and regulations, support Hometown Health Improvement, promote healthy behaviors, respond to public health emergencies and educate and monitor industries that impact the public's health.

The Arkansas Department of Human Services provides a wide range of social services to more than a million Arkansas citizens each year through its programs and private providers. DHS is the largest department of the executive branch of state government. It has more than 7,000 employees and consists of ten divisions and four support offices. DHS maintains offices in each of the state's 75 counties where a person can apply for all the services DHS offers. Services are provided to people from all walks of life and all ages. Major programs, which fall under the Arkansas Department of Human Services, include the federal Food Stamp program and the Medicaid program, which accounts for the largest part of the department's \$4 billion annual budget.



A program of Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield & the Arkansas Department of Health

2008 Confirmed Participating Groups/Companies

Group Name	City	State
Administrative Office of The Courts	Little Rock	AR
Aerojet-Camden	Camden	AR
Arkansas Foundation for Medical Care (AFMC)	Fort Smith	AR
Alltel AP/Shared Services	Little Rock	AR
AMMC Wellness Center	Paragould	AR
ArcelorMittal	Pine Bluff	AR
Arkansas Blue Cross and Blue Shield	Little Rock	AR
Arkansas Center for Health Improvement	Little Rock	AR
Arkansas Children's Hospital	Little Rock	AR
Arkansas Department of Health	Little Rock	AR
Arkansas Department of Human Services	Perryville	AR
Arkansas Diamonds	Hot Springs Village	AR
Arkansas Insurance Department	Little Rock	AR
Arkansas Medical Society	Little Rock	AR
Arkansas Public Service Commission	Little Rock	AR
Arkansas Securities Department	Little Rock	AR
Arkansas State Plant Board	Little Rock,	AR
Arkansas State University	State University	AR
Arkansas Steel Associates L.L.C.	Newport	AR
Arvest	Bentonville	AR
B&F Engineering, Inc.	Hot Springs	AR
Bank of the Ozarks	Little Rock	AR
Batesville School District	Batesville	AR
Bradley County Medical Center	Warren	AR
CARTI	Little Rock	AR
Central Arkansas Water	Little Rock	AR
Century Bank	Texarkana	TX
Cleveland County School District	Rison	AR
Clopton Clinic	Jonesboro	AR
Consolidated Youth Services, Inc	Jonesboro	AR
Cross County Bank	Wynne	AR

CrossRidge Community Hospital	Wynne	AR
Delta Dental of AR	Sherwood	AR
East Arkansas Area Agency on Aging	Jonesboro	AR
Eastern Arkansas Senior Centers	14 Arkansas counties	
EDS	Little Rock	AR
Empty Nesters	Maumelle	AR
Engineering Institute	Farmington	AR
Fernclyff Divas	Benton	AR
First Baptist Church	Fayetteville	AR
First National Bank — Paragould	Paragould	AR
FIS-Automotive Finance	Little Rock	AR
Floyd Sagely Oil & Gas	Fort Smith	AR
Fort Smith Dentistry	Fort Smith	AR
Group Living, Inc	Arkadelphia	AR
Hank's Furniture, Inc.	Sherwood	AR
Harris Hospital	Newport	AR
Hays Food Town, Inc	Wynne	AR
Health Dialog	Boston	MA
Herald Realty Group	Conway	AR
Hillcrest Home	Harrison	AR
Holman Fit-2-Live	Stuttgart	AR
Johnson Dermatology	Ft. Smith	AR
Jefferson Regional Medical Center (JRMC)	Pine Bluff	AR
JRMC Weight Loss Program	Pine Bluff	AR
Kimberly-Clark, Maumelle Facility	Maumelle	AR
Lakewood Elementary School	North Little Rock	AR
Lawrence Health Services	Walnut Ridge	AR
Leggett & Platt Aluminum Group	Fayetteville	AR
Life and Specialty Ventures, LLC	Little Rock	AR
Life Made Simple Nannies	Fayetteville	AR
Little Rock Central High School	Little Rock	AR
Margaret Daniel Primary School	Ashdown	AR
Maumelle Senior Wellness Center	Maumelle	AR
Methodist Health Systems	Dallas	TX
Murfreesboro Public School	Murfreesboro	AR
NEA Clinic	Jonesboro	AR
Nettleton Baptist Church (SS class)	Jonesboro	AR
Nettleton Public Schools	Jonesboro	AR
North Little Rock High School — West Campus	North Little Rock	AR
Northrop Grumman	Little Rock	AR
Northrop Grumman CEO	St. Charles	MO

Nucor-Yamato Steel	Blytheville	AR
NW Arkansas Playgroup & Friends	Prairie Grove	AR
Pine Bluff Sand & Gravel Company	Pine Bluff	AR
Pleasant Grove Elementary School	Texarkana	TX
Potlatch Forest Products Corp	N Las Vegas	NV
Replacement Parts/Bumper-to-Bumper	Little Rock	AR
Roark Group	Rogers	AR
Rocky Point Riders	Conway	AR
Rural Sourcing, Inc	Jonesboro	AR
Saint Jean Industries	Heber Springs	AR
Saline County Hometown Health Coalition	Benton	AR
SARHC-Camden	Camden	AR
Scrappers	Magnolia	AR
Selected Funeral & Life Insurance	Hot Springs	AR
Simmons First National Corporation	Pine Bluff	AR
Social Security Administration	Little Rock	AR
St Bernards Medical Center	Jonesboro	AR
St. Vincent Health System	Little Rock	AR
State of Arkansas DFA	Little Rock	AR
Stihl Southwest, Inc.	Malvern	AR
TARCO	Little Rock	AR
Telcoe Federal Credit Union	Little Rock	AR
Teleflora	Paragould	AR
Teleflora — LA	Los Angeles	CA
Teleflora — OKC	Oklahoma City	OK
The Bald Knobbers	Bald Knob	AR
The Source	Jonesboro	AR
Tilles Elementary	Fort Smith	AR
TOPS AR 559	Jonesboro	AR
Trane — Arkansas	Little Rock	AR
Transamerica Worksite Marketing	Little Rock	AR
Truman Arnold Companies	Texarkana	TX
TSA	Little Rock	AR
University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS)	Little Rock	AR
University of Arkansas — Fort Smith	Fort Smith	AR
URS	White Hall	AR
USFDA/Arkansas Regional Laboratory	Jefferson	AR
Vann Family and Friends	Jacksonville	AR
White River Area Agency on Aging	Batesville	AR
Woodlawn High School	Rison	AR
Youth Bridge, Inc	Fayetteville	AR