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**Contact:**

Ellyn Fisher, The Ad Council, 212-984-1964, [efisher@adcouncil.org](mailto:efisher@adcouncil.org)

Larry Chambers, U.S. Forest Service Press Office, 202-205-1005, [lfchambers@fs.fed.us](mailto:lfchambers@fs.fed.us)

Genevieve O'Sullivan, National Association of State Foresters, 202-624-5417, [gosullivan@stateforesters.org](mailto:gosullivan@stateforesters.org)

Jennifer Comiteau, Draftfcb, 212-885-3676, [jennifer.comiteau@draftfcb.com](mailto:jennifer.comiteau@draftfcb.com)

## **Smokey Bear Gives Bear Hugs in New Wildfire Prevention PSAs**

*Created by Draftfcb, the new PSAs educate audiences about their role in preventing wildfires and feature the 69-year old icon rewarding Americans for taking precautions*

The Ad Council, in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters (NASF), announced today the launch of a new series of public service advertisements (PSAs) featuring Smokey Bear designed to raise awareness about wildfire prevention. As a continuation of the longest running PSA campaign in U.S. history, the new ads include the well-known tagline, "Only YOU can prevent wildfires," and for the first time feature Smokey Bear rewarding Americans with hugs after acting safely with fire.

Celebrating his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday next year, Smokey Bear has been a recognized symbol of protection of America's forests since 1944. His message about wildfire prevention has helped to reduce the number of acres burned annually by wildfires from about 22 million (1944) to an average of 6.9 million today. Although progress has been made, wildfires remain one of the most critical environmental issues affecting the U.S. Many Americans believe that lightning starts most wildfires. In fact, on average, nearly 9 out of 10 wildfires nationwide today are caused by people. The principle causes are careless or accidental behaviors like campfires being left unattended, debris burning on windy days, improper discarding of smoking materials or BBQ coals, and operating equipment without spark arrestors.

"As he approaches his seventieth birthday, Smokey remains the country's renowned and beloved 'spokesbear' for fire prevention," said U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell. "We are confident that these new PSAs will use 'bear hugs' to enlighten a whole new generation of Americans on the critical importance of preventing wildfires. "

Created *pro bono* by Drafftcb, the same ad agency that has developed PSAs for Smokey Bear since his birth, the new television, radio, print, outdoor and web PSAs, along with an extensive social media program, specifically target young adults ages 18 - 34 and aim to continue to decrease the number of human-caused wildfires. The ads feature a more nostalgic-looking Smokey Bear and take a more educational approach, incorporating proper extinguishing techniques for various fire-start scenarios. Simple reminders like "Drown, stir, drown again, feel if it's cold" and "Just 'cause it looks out, doesn't mean it's out" will encourage people to take the proper actions to help ensure their outdoor fires remain in control. In each television spot, Smokey Bear gives hugs to reward people who are acting safely with fire. Drafftcb recruited well-known cinematographer/director Lance Accord and Park Pictures for the production of the PSAs, and worked with Alterian, Inc. for the construction of the new Smokey costume.

"These new PSAs celebrate the Smokey Bear that we all know and love, while continuing to empower Americans to act responsibly when recreating outdoors," said Peggy Conlon, president and CEO of The Ad Council. "According to our latest research, nearly all Americans are aware of Smokey and his message, and they understand that they have a role to play, but many don't know exactly what to do. These ads educate audiences about specific steps to properly safeguard against accidental fire and I believe they will be effective. After all, who doesn't want a hug from Smokey Bear?"

The PSAs direct audiences to visit the campaign's website, [www.SmokeyBear.com](http://www.SmokeyBear.com), where they can take a pledge and learn more about wildfire prevention. Smokey Bear is also continuing to encourage young adults to be proactive in preventing wildfires through his social media channels on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#). A new hash tag, #SmokeyBearHugs, will be promoted as an extension of the new creative in an effort to continue the dialogue about his important messages.

"We want to make sure that Smokey Bear remains part of every generation," said Eric Springer, CCO of Drafftcb Los Angeles. "Smokey's an icon for protecting our forests and empowering us with his famous words: Only You Can Prevent Wildfires. Nothing makes Smokey happier than when people not only listen to his words but learn from them. So happy in fact, he will walk up and give you a big bear hug when he catches people acting responsibly with fire outdoors. So be smart out there next time, and who knows, you may end up getting a big bear hug from America's most lovable, wildfire-preventing bear."

The Ad Council will distribute the new PSAs to media outlets nationwide this week. Per the organization's model, the PSAs will air and run in advertising time and space that is entirely donated by the media. Over the last 69 years, media outlets have donated more than \$1 billion in time and space for the Wildfire Prevention campaign.

"The message of wildfire prevention is as timeless as Smokey Bear," said NASF President and WV State Forester Randy Dye. "With drought conditions and an increase in the

number of communities built in areas close to and in forests, his message of personal responsibility remains as important as ever. We believe the new round of PSAs will help teach and remind people to make sure they put their fires out properly.”

Since 1944, Smokey Bear has been communicating his message of wildfire prevention. His original catch phrase was “Smokey Says – Care Will Prevent 9 out of 10 Forest Fires.” It was changed in 1947 on printed materials to “Remember... Only YOU Can Prevent Forest Fires.” Most recently, in 2001, the well-known message was again modified to “Only You Can Prevent Wildfires.” The term “wildfire” applies to any unplanned, unwanted or uncontrolled outdoor fire in natural areas, including grass fires and brush fires.

### **U.S. Forest Service**

The U.S. Forest Service is the agency responsible for overseeing the use of Smokey Bear in cooperation with the National Association of State Foresters and the Ad Council. The U.S. Forest Service manages 193 million acres of national forests and grasslands for the American Public. Its mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the Nation’s forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations.

### **National Association of State Foresters**

The National Association of State Foresters is comprised of the directors of forestry agencies from the fifty states, eight U.S. territories and associated states, and the District of Columbia. Through public-private partnership, NASF seeks to advance sustainable forestry, conservation, and protection of forest lands and their associated resources. As a partner with the U.S. Forest Service, State Foresters are committed to the continued delivery of Smokey Bear’s message of personal responsibility in wildfire protection.

### **The Ad Council**

The Ad Council is a private, non-profit organization with a rich history of marshalling volunteer talent from the advertising and media industries to deliver critical messages to the American public. Having produced literally thousands of PSA campaigns addressing the most pressing social issues of the day, the Ad Council has affected, and continues to affect, tremendous positive change by raising awareness, inspiring action and saving lives. To learn more about the Ad Council and its campaigns, visit [www.adcouncil.org](http://www.adcouncil.org), like us on [Facebook](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) or view our PSAs on [YouTube](#).

### **Draftfcb**

With an equal focus on creativity and accountability, Draftfcb is committed to producing brilliant ideas that change consumer behavior. As a global, fully integrated marketing communications agency operating against a single P&L, Draftfcb provides clients with highly collaborative, channel-neutral thinking that delivers engagement and, most importantly, action. With nearly 140 years of combined expertise, Draftfcb has roots in both consumer advertising and behavioral, data-driven direct marketing. The Draftfcb network spans 151 offices in 90

countries and employs nearly 8,600 people. The agency is part of the Interpublic Group of Companies (NYSE:IPG). For more information, visit [www.draftfc.com](http://www.draftfc.com).

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