# NEWS RELEASE

KNOX COUNTY MAYOR MIKE RAGSDALE

400 MAIN STREET, SUITE 615, KNOXVILLE TN 37902

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Ranee Randby,
Knox County Health Department
215-5534 or 388-6186

## HOW WILL YOU CHANGE THE WORLD?

***KNOX COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT EXTENDS DEADLINE FOR FEEDBACK***

Knox County Health Department (KCHD) and hundreds of other public health agencies across the U.S. are celebrating National Public Health Week April 7-13. This year's theme is Climate Change: Our Health in the Balance, highlighting the ways our actions impact the environment and how the changing world impacts our health.

"There is a direct connection between climate change and our health," said KCHD Director Mark Jones. "And every person can make a difference. If all 300 million Americans committed to one small change, the combined results would be huge."

To help families, businesses and children learn more about ways to save money and energy while saving the planet, KCHD has posted action plans for home, work and for children on their Web site: www.knoxcounty.org/health. Everyone is encouraged to give feedback on what steps he or she plans to take to help protect the environment by simply clicking the link posted on the home page. **To maximize on heightened awareness surrounding Earth Day and Earthfest activities, the deadline for the drawing has been extended to May 1. Twenty-nine (29) names will be selected at random to receive a free water bottle and a copy of David Gershon's book, *Low Carbon Diet: A 30 Day Program to Lose 5000 Pounds.***

Severe weather-related events such as hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding and drought have raised public awareness of the climate/health link. Here in the southeast, our summers are getting hotter, which means more heat stress and heatstroke, with an increased risk for the poor and elderly. Asthma is on the rise and allergies are worsened by rising temperatures and air pollution. East Tennessee is especially impacted by ozone pollution and the associated health risks during the summer months. Diseases such as West Nile Virus are encroaching into our area and others will follow. Warmer weather shortens mosquitoes' breeding cycles, allowing them to multiply at a much faster rate, and pose an even greater threat of disease. Drought has scorched crops in many areas, raising food prices and forcing some foods to be shipped in from farther away. Other parts of the country have been hit with floods or wildfires, which endanger human lives and adversely affect the food and water supplies.

KCHD's recommendations, which are attached here for your convenience, save energy and money. By taking baby steps, Americans can find their way to a healthier community and climate.

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