



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Scale Back Alabama selects coach

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Roger Schultz, a finalist in NBC's 5th season of the *Biggest Loser* contest, has been tapped to lead the state in its efforts to lose 500,000 pounds next year. Schultz will serve as the "coach" for the thousands of people expected to participate in the state's weight-loss competition, Scale Back Alabama.

"Last year, more than 40,000 people participated in the 10-week contest and lost a total of 207,000 pounds," said Donald Jones, chairman of the Scale Back Alabama Task Force and CEO of Marion Regional Medical Center in Hamilton. "This year, we hope to increase the number of people participating and lose half a million pounds, and we think Roger is the perfect person to help us reach our goal."

According to Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, Alabamians have a big challenge in terms of obesity, but one that can be met with the right information and motivation. "Our incidences of diabetes and heart problems are much higher than the rest of the nation, but so is our obesity rate," said Dr. Williamson. "We've simply got to get our citizens healthier, or my prediction is that this generation of Alabamians will be the first ever to not live as long as their parents."

Schultz, who was an award-winning, All-American football player at the University of Alabama, worked for a spot on NBC's *Biggest Loser's Couples* show in 2008 and was a finalist in the contest. "One of the biggest motivators for me was that I wanted to be healthier and to set a good example for my son," said Schultz. "I realized that I was killing myself slowly with my habits and that I had to change. During the contest, I lost 164 pounds. It was hard work, but it was well worth it, and I want to see all Alabamians at least get a chance to become healthier."

Scale Back Alabama is a free program for adults, age 18 and older, that will begin in January of 2009. Teams of four will compete for cash prizes (see below) and will be provided information on healthy eating habits and exercise through weekly lesson plans. Currently, local businesses, churches and other organizations are being encouraged to go to www.scalebackalabama.com

To learn more about how they can involve their employees or other constituents in the contest. A comprehensive toolkit is available to assist willing individuals in hosting the contest in their communities.

Prizes:

If all four team members lose at least 10 pounds, that team will be placed in a drawing for one of three grand prizes (\$1,000 per team member, \$500 per team member and \$250 per team member).

Individuals who lose at least 10 pounds, even if their team members didn't, will be placed in a drawing for 50 cash prizes of \$100.

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