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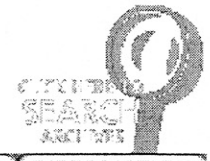

Thu, May. 6, 2004

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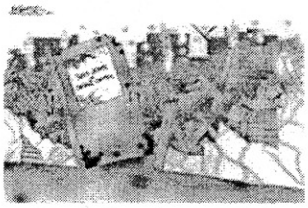

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Healthier governor dishes Healthy Arkansas plan

Wednesday, May 5, 2004

Sent May 4, 2004
drwb
By David Robinson

Arkansas News Bureau

LITTLE ROCK - One hundred and five pounds ago, Gov. Mike Huckabee said he wouldn't have felt as credible as he did Tuesday when he announced ambitious health targets for Arkansans.

Today's slender governor shared a microphone with the state's health director, Dr. Fay Boozman, also slim after losing 70 pounds, who together will lead a two-year campaign to persuade Arkansans to lose weight and quit smoking.

The two-year goals as part of the Healthy Arkansas campaign:

-Increasing from 64 percent to 85 percent the number of juveniles active three times weekly for more than 20 minutes.

-Increasing from 15 percent to 30 percent the number of adults who exercise at least three times a week for 30 minutes.

-Reduce youth smoking from 36 percent to 16 percent.

-Reduce adult smoking from 24 percent to 12 percent.

-Reduce obesity from 11 percent to 5 percent in children.

-Reduce adult obesity from 23 percent to 15 percent.

Details about how the state will go about achieving the goals will be presented in the weeks and months to come, Huckabee said.

Boozman told Huckabee that his department accepts the challenge. Both cited some powerful financial motives.

Arkansas' Medicaid program serves 600,000 people at $3 billion a year. Boozman recalled that when he was a state senator in 1995, the cost was $600 million a year.

"The state's physical health is going to determine the state's fiscal health," Boozman said. "There's only one state (West