



Smoke-free News

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

MARCH 29, 2007

Red Wing Meeting

The first Wednesday every month at noon.

Next Meeting:

April 4, 2007

12:00 PM: Meeting starts

1:00 PM: Meeting ends

(Lunch is provided. Please RSVP to Tom Wolff.)

Fairview Red Wing Professional & Community Center
1407 West 4th Street
Red Wing, MN

The old hospital building.

Zumbrota Meeting

The second Thursday evening every month.

Next Meeting:

April 12, 2007

7:00 PM: Meeting starts

8:30 PM: Meeting ends

Zumbrota City Hall
175 West Avenue
Zumbrota, MN

West Avenue is one block west of Main Street (State Highway 58).

Cannon Falls Meeting

The third Thursday evening every month.

Next Meeting:

April 19, 2007

6:30 PM: Meeting starts

8:00 PM: Meeting ends

Cannon Falls Public Library
306 West Mill Street
Cannon Falls, MN

Carlton County Smoke-free

Once again, a local government has shown leadership the rest of the state can follow. On February 13, 2007 the Carlton County Board of Commissioners voted 5 - 0 to pass a comprehensive smoke-free law.

This area of Minnesota has always been a leader in the effort to protect people from exposure to secondhand smoke. In 2000, the town of Moose Lake was the first local government in Minnesota to

pass a smoke-free law. Cloquet passed a smoke-free law in 2001. Now all public places and workplaces in Carlton County will be smoke-free.

To keep smoke out of buildings, smoking is not permitted within 25 feet of entrances, exits, open windows and ventilation intakes. At least 50 percent of outdoor seating at bars and restaurants must be smoke-free. The new law takes effect on June 1, 2007.

Freedom to Breathe Act Update

On March 27, 2007 the full Senate voted 41 to 24 to pass the Freedom to Breathe Act!!!!

The companion bill in the House has passed four committee hearings. It must pass at least one more committee hearing before it can go to the full House for a

vote.

Amendments to the bill have been passed in both bodies. It is not clear at this time how the differences will be resolved. If there is a conference committee, both the House and Senate will have to vote to approve the compromise bill.

Kandiyohi County to be smoke-free

There's no doubt about it, the Kandiyohi County Board of Commissioners will pass a smoke-free law if the Freedom to Breathe Act does not pass, or passes in a weakened form. On March 20, 2007, they voted 5 - 0 in favor of a resolution supporting the approval of a comprehensive smoke-free

workplace law for Minnesota.

The commissioners would prefer a state law so that there will be consistency across county lines. However, the commissioners made it clear that they will pass their own comprehensive county law if the state legislature does not pass a strong state law.

You Can Help Make Minnesota Smoke-free

We have won a victory, but the battle is far from over. Here are two easy ways you can support the Freedom to Breathe Act. You don't even have to leave home!

Write a Letter to the Editor of your local newspaper.

Tell your personal story. Why is smoke-free air important to you? (Need help with your letter? Give Tom Wolff a call.)

Write, e-mail, or call your Senator and Representative.

Ask him or her to support the Freedom to Breathe Act as originally introduced. (If you call, it is fine to leave a detailed message.)

Senator Steve Murphy

(Note: Senator Murphy voted to pass the Freedom to Breathe Act. *Please thank him* and encourage his continued support.)

Capitol Building, Room 325
St. Paul, MN 55155-1606
(651) 296-4264

Use his e-mail form on his Senate website: www.senate.leg.state.mn.us

Rep. Sandy Wollschlager

335 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 296-8635
rep.sandy.wollschlager@house.mn

Representative Steve Sviggum

247 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 296-2273
rep.steve.sviggum@house.mn

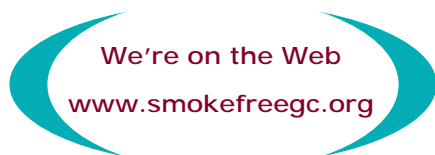
HOW TO CONTACT US

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What's happening in Goodhue County?

The most effective way we can support smoke-free air for everyone in Minnesota is to actively work for a smoke-free Goodhue County. Local governments have led the fight for smoke-free air in workplaces and public places. This leadership is having an impact at the state capitol. This is not the time to relax. More than 20 Minnesota communities are currently working on local smoke-free workplace laws.

We are continuing to recruit new supporters to our cause. On March 26, 2007 we mailed over 13,000 fliers with a postage paid reply card to county residents. We will hold a phone bank in April to call every person who returns a reply card. We are also in the process of having informal meetings with each of the commissioners to hear any concerns they may have, and to explain how smoke-free workplaces reduce health care costs and save lives. We are recruiting local physicians to actively support smoke-free workplaces.

As always, we value your input. Thank you to everyone who has come to one of our monthly meetings in Red Wing, Zumbrota or Cannon Falls. If you have never come to a meeting, April would be a great time to come and get acquainted.

The Cost of Secondhand Smoke in Minnesota

The annual cost of secondhand smoke in Minnesota:
\$215.7 million
66,000 patients
581 deaths

"These data show that passing a comprehensive statewide smoke-free law is good health policy and good economic policy."

Marc Manley, M.D.
BlueCross BlueShield of Minnesota

A new study gives the first-ever look at the health care costs, and the cost in human lives, due to secondhand smoke in Minnesota. The study was done by researchers at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in collaboration with BlueCross and BlueShield of Minnesota. It uses Minnesota-specific data.

The study analyzes the cost of treating diseases that are caused by secondhand smoke. These diseases were identified in the 2006 Surgeon General's Report. They include lung cancer and heart disease in adults; and low birth weight, acute respiratory illness, middle ear infections and asthma in children.

The researchers calculated the

proportion of each disease caused by secondhand smoke. They found that at least 66,000 Minnesotans are treated each year for diseases caused by secondhand smoke.

The annual cost for treating illness caused by secondhand smoke in Minnesota is \$215.7 million in public and private health care. This is a conservative figure that does not include costs for long-term care or lost productivity. To put this in perspective, this is more than the Minnesota state budget for transportation, early childhood education, and veterans homes combined.

The study documents that at least 581 deaths are caused each year in Minnesota by exposure to secondhand

smoke. Most of these deaths are adults who die from lung cancer (112 deaths) or heart disease (411 deaths).

We all knew that we were paying a price here in Minnesota for exposure to secondhand smoke. Now we know what this cost is, both in dollars and in human suffering. Eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke at work and in public places will help to control rising health care costs, prevent unnecessary suffering and save lives.

A report on this study *Health Care Costs and Secondhand Smoke: The Bottom Line* is available. Go to our home page at www.smokefreegc.org and click on the link at the bottom of the story.