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Smoke-Free Celebrations in Red Wing and Cannon Falls

60 people came to the Smoke-Free Celebration in Red Wing May 2, 2007.



110 people came to the Smoke-Free Celebration in Cannon Falls on May 17, 2007.



We wanted to reach out and connect with supporters of smoke-free workplaces. On March 26, 2007, we mailed 13,268 brochures to residents of our county. The brochure had a tear off reply card that said, "Yes! I support smoke-free workplaces in Goodhue County, including bars and restaurants." The card had spaces for the person's name and contact information.

We expected to receive about 400 of these reply cards. That is the typical response rate for this type of mailing. We have been very pleased, and a little overwhelmed to have received 1,679 reply cards so far. What an amazing response!

This was even more amazing when you consider that about a third of these cards are form couples, with the names of two supporters on one card.

We wanted to celebrate this tremendous show of support for smoke-free workplaces. We held two phone banks and invited as many people as we could reach to come to a Smoke-free Celebration in Red Wing or Cannon Falls.

Thank you to everyone who came. It was great to get to meet you in person and to hear why smoke-free workplaces and public places are important to you.



Smoke-Free News

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

MAY 31, 2007

You are amazing!

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On May 16, 2007, history was made in Minnesota. Governor Pawlenty signed the Freedom to Breathe Act into law. This only happened because of the hard work and dedication of tens of thousands of Minnesotans just like YOU!

Yes, the credit has to go to the grassroots people who let their state senators and representatives know that the time had come to save lives and end needless suffering. You wrote letters to the editor. You called your state legislators. You sent them letters and e-mail. On January 30, 2007, a group of

26 people from District 28 traveled to the state capitol to meet with our elected officials in person.

Our legislators always heard the same message: "Exposure to secondhand smoke in workplaces and public places is killing our family members, friends and neighbors. It is past time for our state government to take action and eliminate this well documented public health hazard."

You spoke, and they heard you! Every call and e-mail made a difference. Thank you!



Governor Tim Pawlenty at the signing ceremony for the Freedom to Breathe Act.

It's not over yet

As we celebrate this tremendous victory, it is important to understand that this is just the beginning of the process of becoming a smoke-free state.

The Freedom to Breathe Act takes effect on October 1, 2007. It may be hard to believe, but many people in Minnesota don't even know this change is coming. Our coalition will play an important role in educating people in Goodhue County about the new law and the health benefits it will bring.

Education is critical for a smooth implementation. If the majority of the public understand the new law, experience from other states has shown that there will be a very high level of compliance from the first day, and that the law will be virtually self-enforcing, with little if any need for involvement by law enforcement or the courts.

We can't do this without your help. (Please turn to related stories on page 3.)

It's not too late to say THANK YOU!

Senator Murphy and Representative Wollschlager both voted to pass the Freedom to Breathe Act. Won't you take a minute to contact both of them and thank them for voting to protect everyone's health? It is important for them to know how much their vote is appreciated by the people they represent.

Senator Steve Murphy

Use his e-mail form on his Senate website:

www.senate.leg.state.mn.us

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

Rep. Sandy Wollschlager

rep.sandy.wollschlager@house.mn

335 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 296-8635

Minnesota House and Senate pass Freedom to Breathe Act

The Freedom to Breathe Act was introduced in the House and Senate on January 25, 2007. This was one of the most thoroughly scrutinized bills in recent memory. It was heard and debated in seven committees in the Senate and five committees in the House. Some of these committees heard the bill twice.

The committee hearings finally ended and the Senate and House both voted to pass their versions of the bill. The Senate passed a stronger bill than the House. In order to resolve the differences, a Conference Committee was appointed. Their job was to work

out compromise language for a final bill. The Conference Committee consisted of five senators and five representatives. All of them were authors of the original bill. The conference committee met twice to work out the language of the final bill. The focus was on crafting a bill that could pass in the House.

On the morning of May 11, 2007, the Senate voted 43 to 21 to adopt the Conference Committee report and pass the bill. The House had a full agenda that day. It was 11:30 pm before they took up the conference committee report. There was a strong

challenge to reject the report and send the bill back to the Conference Committee. This would have greatly weakened or killed the bill. This was the real vote in the House on the Freedom to Breathe Act and it was very close. The motion to return the bill to the Conference Committee lost by only seven votes. It was 1:00 am before the final vote was taken and the bill passed 81 to 48.

This was a real team effort. The most important members of the team were people just like you who contacted their elected officials. Your voice was heard!

What the new law covers

The Freedom to Breathe Act is a comprehensive law that prohibits smoking in virtually all indoor workplaces and public places. It applies to places of employment where two or more people work, or volunteer to do what is normally paid work.

Smoking will be prohibited in: restaurants, bars and private clubs; offices, stores and factories; public transportation, including taxis; vehicles used for work, if more than

one person is present; and home offices if employees are present.

Indoor smoking will still be allowed in: private homes and vehicles; hotel and motel guest rooms; tobacco shops (to sample tobacco products); buildings on family farms with no more than two employees; the cabs of heavy commercial vehicles over 26,000 pounds; certain psychiatric settings, scientific studies, and separately ventilated smoking rooms in nursing homes; the cabs of farm

vehicles and construction equipment; traditional Native American ceremonies; theatrical performances; and the disabled veterans rest camp in Washington County.

Local governments will retain the power to adopt stronger smoking laws. A violation of the new law will be a petty misdemeanor with a fine of up to \$300. The Minnesota Department of Health is authorized to develop rules for the implementation of the new law.

Illinois passes smoke-free law, will Wisconsin be next?

The Smoke Free Illinois Act passed both houses of the General Assembly May 1, 2007. Governor Rod Blagojevich is expected to sign the bill into law. The new law will prohibit smoking in public places, places of employment, government vehicles,

and within 15 feet of an entrance, window or ventilation intake. Smoking will still be permitted in private residences, retail tobacco stores, private and semi-private rooms in nursing homes, and hotel and motel sleeping rooms. The new law

will take effect on January 1, 2008.

Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle strongly supports a comprehensive smoke-free law. A bill to prohibit smoking in any public place or place of employment was introduced in the Wisconsin Senate on April 18, 2007.

Can you help with our booth at the Goodhue County Fair?

We will kick off our effort to educate the public about the Freedom to Breathe Act at the Goodhue County Fair August 7 - 11, 2007. This is a great opportunity to meet people from all parts of the county and to spread the word about the new smoke-free law starting October 1, 2007.

We will have an eye-catching display about the Freedom to Breathe Act. Visitors to our booth will be invited to test their knowledge about the new

law. Everyone who plays our electronic quiz will receive a prize.

This approach proved to be very effective last summer. However, the most important ingredient was not the display or the quiz. The most important ingredient was our volunteers - people just like you.

We are asking people to volunteer for a 2.5 hour shift. Here are the hours for the fair:

August 7: 5:00 - 10:00 pm

August 8 - 10: noon - 10:00 pm

August 11: noon - 8:00 pm

Don't miss out on the summer fun! Call Tom Wolff and volunteer today!



2006 Goodhue County Fair

Will the Freedom to Breathe Act be successful in your community?

October 1, 2007 will be here before you know it. What will happen in your community when the Freedom to Breathe Act takes effect? Will we see a high level of compliance, or will we see confusion and negative reaction to the change? A lot of this depends on you.

Each of our coalition members has unique insights into their own communities. How will people react to the new law in your part of the

county? Are there certain business owners or key members of the community we should be working with to help ensure a successful implementation? Are there some potential trouble spots in your community? How can we win them over?

Only you can answer these questions for your community. Won't you come to one of our meetings in June and help us answer these questions?

The dates and times for the June meetings are given below.

Please note: We will NOT meet in July or August. We hope to see everyone at the County Fair. Be sure to stop by our booth and say hello!

"ONLY YOU CAN ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY."

Come and celebrate, then help us plan for October 1, 2007

Red Wing
June 6, 2007
Noon - 1:00 pm
Fairview Red Wing Professional & Community Center (The old hospital building.)
1407 West 4th Street
Red Wing, MN
Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Gaye Ruhlach (651) 385-6176.

Zumbrota
June 14, 2007
7:00 - 8:15 pm
Zumbrota Public Library
100 West Avenue
Zumbrota, MN
West Avenue is one block west of Main Street (State Highway 58).
Dessert will be provided.

Cannon Falls
June 21, 2007
6:30 - 7:45 pm
Cannon Falls Public Library
306 West Mill Street
Cannon Falls, MN
Dessert will be provided.