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Attitudes toward secondhand smoke have changed by Tom Wolff

Starting October 1st, we will all be able to go to work and to indoor public places without being forced to breathe secondhand smoke. Contrast this with the new TV show "Madmen", a drama about the advertising business on Madison Avenue circa 1960. Everyone in this show smokes. There isn't a scene where someone isn't lighting up another cigarette. This drove home to me what a profound change our society has gone through in the last fifty years or so.

When I was a kid, my dad smoked. The 1964 Surgeon General's Report, *Smoking and Health*, gave him a new

perspective on smoking. The report made it clear that smoking kills smokers. My dad quit smoking cold turkey soon after the report came out. I was ten years old. For many smokers, it was not this easy.

It didn't take long for people to start wondering what breathing smoke-filled air at work and in public places was doing to the health of nonsmokers. In response to these concerns, Minnesota led the nation by passing the Minnesota Clean Indoor Act in 1975. The law relied heavily on the use of "smoking" and "no smoking" sections as a method of protection. Many Minnesotans still had to breathe secondhand

smoke while they were at work.

The Health Consequences of Involuntary Exposure to Tobacco Smoke: A Report of the Surgeon General was released in 2006. It analyzed more than twenty years of scientific research on secondhand smoke. Some important conclusions from this report are:

- Breathing secondhand smoke causes lung cancer and heart disease in adult nonsmokers.
- There is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke.
- Smoke-free environments are the only effective way to

protect nonsmokers from disease caused by breathing secondhand smoke.

An overwhelming majority of our state legislators heeded this report. They voted to pass the Freedom to Breathe Act of 2007. This law will eliminate a serious public health hazard.

What a change from fifty years ago! Then, no one knew the harm smoking was doing to the health of smokers and nonsmokers alike. Now we know, and we can be proud of our elected officials for taking action to protect the health of all Minnesotans.



Smoke-Free News

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 5

SEPTEMBER 20, 2007

Mark your Calendar! Celebrate Fresh Air! Freedom to Breathe Events in Goodhue County

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Reception in Red Wing

Monday, October 1st from 5:00 - 7:00 pm a Freedom to Breathe Reception and Kickoff will be held in Red Wing. The event will take place at the Indigo Room, 325 Main Street, on the third floor. The entrance to the building is between Indigo Salon and White Hawk Gifts.

We have invited Senator Murphy and Representative Wollschlager to attend. They both voted to pass the Freedom to Breathe Act. This will give everyone a chance to thank them in person for voting to

protect the health of all Minnesotans. Also invited are the Red Wing Mayor and City Council, and the Goodhue County Commissioners.

Refreshments will be served. This event is free. We encourage everyone to use the reception as a jumping off point to meet with friends and go out to celebrate the smoke-free change.

Bowling in Zumbrota

Wednesday, October 3rd from 5:00 - 7:00 pm we will meet at the Evergreen Lanes in Zumbrota for an evening of

bowling in the smoke-free air. We will provide pizza and pop. Please RSVP to Tom Wolff (*see page 4*).

Evening Out in Cannon Falls

Thursday, October 4th meet at the Mill Street Tavern from **5:00 - 5:30 pm** for free appetizers (you are on your own for drinks). We will move on to visit other restaurants and bars in Cannon Falls, give them some business, and tell them how much we like the smoke-free air. Contact Susan Johnson (*see page 4*) for more details.

How will the new law work?

Minnesota's Freedom to Breathe Act of 2007 will extend secondhand smoke protections to virtually all indoor workplaces, including bars, restaurants and private clubs. The Freedom to Breathe bill was passed by a bipartisan majority of lawmakers and signed into law by Governor Tim Pawlenty on May 16, 2007. The law, which goes into effect on

October 1st, makes Minnesota the twentieth state to go smoke-free.

Can people still smoke outdoors?

Indoor smoking will no longer be permitted in workplaces, public places, public transportation and public meetings. The state law does not regulate smoking outdoors.

Local governments can pass an ordinance to regulate outdoor smoking. There is no local ordinance in Goodhue County that regulates outdoor smoking. Business owners can make outdoor smoking policies for their property.

TURN TO **HOW IT WORKS**, PAGE 2

Remembering Jim by Susan Johnson

Five years ago this fall, my brother Jim died. He was 55 years old. In May of 2002, doctors told him that the cough he'd had for the past several months was not a fungal growth in his lung as they had thought, but cancer. He died four months later.

Jim started smoking when he was a teenager, but had quit 18 years before he died. According to the American Cancer Society, 10 years after a person quits smoking their lung cancer death rates are similar to that of a nonsmoker.

Even though Jim was no longer a smoker, he always worked in places with secondhand smoke. He was a

bartender and a restaurant manager. He was really good at what he did - he was quick, funny and a hard worker. His doctor told Jim that, although his job had made him happy, it had been bad for his health.

My family will be very happy on October 1st when the smoke-free workplace law goes into effect in Minnesota and thousands of workers like Jim are protected from the dangerous health impacts of secondhand smoke.

We wonder if Jim would still be around if Minnesota had always had a smoke-free workplace law.



This photo of Jim Johnson was taken one year before he died.

Working with local businesses

We are working with local business to help them make a successful change. The local Chambers of Commerce have printed information we provided about the Freedom to Breathe Act in their September newsletters. We have made a list of all the bars, restaurants, and private clubs in the county that

still permit smoking. We will be delivering Freedom to Breathe Business Owner Information Kits to them.

Under our current law, smoking is legal in retail stores and in some other businesses. We know of two retail stores where the owner smokes in his office. This will no longer be allowed.

Starting October 1st the entire business must be smoke-free.

Do you know of a store or similar business in your community where people smoke? We would like to know so that we can get an information kit to the owner. Just contact Tom Wolff or Susan Johnson (*see page 4*).

HOW IT WORKS Continued from page 1

The responsibilities of proprietors

Starting October 1st, businesses must remove ashtrays and other smoking equipment from indoor areas. They must post "no smoking" signs at all entrances to their establishment.

If a customer smokes indoors in violation of the law, the proprietor must ask the customer to stop smoking. If the customer refuses to stop smoking, the proprietor must ask the customer to leave. If the customer refuses to leave, the proprietor must report the disorderly customer to local

law enforcement. A violation of the law is a petty misdemeanor with a fine of up to \$300. A customer who is smoking cannot be served food or beverage.

What can you do to help?

For the first several months, the focus will be on educating proprietors and customers. If you see someone smoking indoors, bring it to the attention of the proprietor. If the proprietor fails to take action, contact Tom Wolff or Susan Johnson and we will contact the business owner. We

will not reveal your name.

To report a violation

Starting October 1st, to report a violation of the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act in Goodhue County contact Tom Wolff or Susan Johnson (*see page 4 for contact info*).

For more information

There is a great new Web Site loaded with information about the Freedom to Breathe Act. Be sure to take a look: www.freshairmn.org

How are you celebrating October 1st?

October 1st will soon be here. Each of us has an opportunity to celebrate the change to smoke-free air. By celebrating the day, we can also help to educate our community about the Freedom to Breathe Act.

One fun and easy way to celebrate is to bring some goodies to your workplace. It could be a plate of cookies, pastry, fresh fruit, salsa and chips or anything else you think your coworkers will enjoy. You could even bake a "fresh air" cake.

To tie your treats in with the start of the Freedom to Breathe Act, just cut out and use the sign below. Add your name at the bottom of the sign and put it next to the food. This will help to spread the word about the Freedom to Breathe Act and remind

your coworkers that it takes effect on October 1st.

If you are retired, you can still celebrate with your book club, church group, or any other social group you belong to. Just pick a meeting date for your group that is as close to October 1st as possible and volunteer to bring the treats.

If everyone reading this newsletter sponsors a celebration, we will have well over 2,000 Freedom to Breathe celebrations in Goodhue County. What a great way to spread the word that smoke-free air for everyone in Minnesota starts October 1st!

To add to the fun, we will have a contest to see who has the most creative celebration. (*see Contest Rules at right*)

Contest Rules

Everyone can enter (except the judges). The winner will receive a fabulous prize. (We can't reveal the prizes now, but trust us they are fabulous!)

Our judges will pick one winner from each county commissioner district. The judges will be looking for the most creative treats and/or the most creative presentation of the treats. Please submit a brief written description of your celebration and/or a photo to Tom Wolff by e-mail or regular mail (*addresses on page 4*).

The deadline to enter is October 31, 2007. The winners will be announced in our November newsletter.

Good luck everyone and have fun!



Let's Celebrate!

October 1st is the start of healthy, smoke-free air in every workplace and public place in Minnesota, including bars, restaurants and private clubs.

Here are some treats to start the celebration.

Enjoy!