



Smoke-Free News

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October 1st + 2 months

From all accounts, the change to a smoke-free Minnesota has been met with wide acceptance and support here in Goodhue County. People who smoke are cooperating with the change in state law and stepping outside to smoke. Residents of our county are visiting businesses they avoided in the past because they were full of smoke.

Debby Bradley of Red Wing reports that she and her family have enjoyed bowling at Nybo's Lanes now that they are smoke-free. "My family gets to go bowling now! I was not willing to risk the health of my children by exposing them to secondhand smoke. This is a healthy change for both customers and employees," Bradley said.

Mary Dalbotten reports that she enjoys the smoke-free air at the Kenyon VFW. She recently started playing pool at the VFW and is hoping to get together with friends to play on a more or less weekly basis. Employees at the VFW tell Mary that the smoke-free air has not hurt business.

There may still be a few places in our county that haven't gotten the word about Minnesota's smoke-free law. Smoking indoors in a public place, place of employment, public transportation, or public meeting is a violation of state law. If you see a violation please call Goodhue County Public Health Service (651) 385-6100.

What will 2008 bring?

This has been an exciting year for smoke-free advocates in Minnesota. It took our state legislature over three months of public hearings and debate, but when it came down to the final vote, the Freedom to Breathe Act of 2007 passed by a wide margin.

Minnesota's new smoke-free law took effect October 1, 2007 and all of us have been enjoying the smoke-free air.

Illinois also passed a comprehensive smoke-free law this year that takes effect on January 1, 2008. The new law prohibits smoking in all workplaces and public places, including student dormitories. Smoking is also prohibited outdoors within 15 feet of an entrance.

A bill for a smoke-free law has been stalled in the Wisconsin legislature since May 31, 2007. Now that Wisconsin has finally passed a state budget, there may be some action on this bill.

Back in Minnesota, the 85th Legislative Session will resume on February 12, 2008. Experience from other states has shown that there may be an attempt to introduce legislation to partially roll back the protection from secondhand smoke. Unfortunately, some legislators in our state still don't understand that secondhand smoke is a serious public health hazard. It is extremely important that we stay organized and prepared to react on short notice to any bill that would bring smoking back to some Minnesota workplaces.



Freedom to Breathe Reception and Kickoff in Red Wing October 1, 2007. From left to right: Red Wing City Council President Carol Duff, Red Wing Mayor Donna Dummer, Senator Steve Murphy.

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Smoke-free Minnesota

The cloud of tobacco smoke has finally lifted from every workplace in Minnesota. For too many years, this cloud of smoke had been lingering in workplaces such as restaurants, bars, private clubs, and bowling lanes. These workers are no longer second class citizens who have to put their health at risk every time they go to work.

In 1975, Minnesota led the nation by passing the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act (MCIAA). This was the first state law intended to protect nonsmokers from having to breathe secondhand smoke at work.

How did we lose this leadership position? Why did it take over 30 years to eliminate the loopholes from the

MCIAA and protect the health of every worker from the harm caused by breathing secondhand smoke?

Our early success attracted the attention of the tobacco industry. The loose coalition of health advocates in our state was up against an industry with nearly unlimited resources. It took us decades to overcome this.

We have won a great battle, but the war is not over. You can count on the tobacco industry to take advantage of every opportunity to bring the cloud of smoke back to our work places and public places. It is more critical than ever for us to stay organized and vigilant. Thank you for your support.

Mark your calendar !

Tobacco **vs.** **Minnesota** **Clearing the Air**

Learn more about the struggle to bring smoke-free air to every workplace in our state. ClearWay Minnesota and Twin Cities Public Television (TPT) have co-produced a documentary that chronicles the decades-long struggle for a smoke-free Minnesota.

This 30 minute program is packed with information including interviews with Minnesotans who were in the front lines leading the fight.

Sunday, December 16, 2007 8:00 pm

TPT Channel 17