



# Smoke-Free News

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 5

DECEMBER 12, 2008

## January 2009 Meetings

Come to the location and time most convenient for you. The same agenda is presented at each location.

### Red Wing

**January 7, 2009**

**Noon to 1:00 pm**

*(Brown bag lunch meeting. Bring your own lunch, bottled water is provided.)*

**Fairview Red Wing Professional & Community Center**

**1407 West 4th Street, Red Wing**

### Kenyon

**January 8, 2009**

**6:30 to 7:30 pm**

**First Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**309 Forest Street, Kenyon**

### Cannon Falls

**January 13, 2009**

**6:30 to 7:30 pm**

**Cannon Falls Library**  
**306 West Mill Street, Cannon Falls**

Opponents of smoke-free air have not given up their efforts to have our smoke-free law weakened or repealed. They claim two of the newly elected members of the Minnesota House as allies. Many of the legislators who opposed the Freedom to Breathe Act in 2007 were re-elected.

We still can't take smoke-free air for granted. The new legislative session starts January 6, 2009. We need to stay organized and remain vigilant.

## Ten Years Later: Minnesota's Tobacco Settlement

Four states, Mississippi, Texas, Florida and Minnesota led the nation when they sued the major tobacco companies to recover health-related costs. Each of the four won individual settlements. In November 1998, the other 46 states joined together in a group to settle with the tobacco companies under the Master Settlement Agreement.

In Minnesota, the action began in 1994 when the state, together with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (BCBS), filed a lawsuit against the major tobacco companies. The tobacco companies were accused of deliberately withholding information from Minnesota consumers about the harmful nature of tobacco products. During the trial, the state's legal team gained access to tens of thousands of secret tobacco industry documents that proved this allegation.

In 1998, the Minnesota lawsuit ended with the world's fourth largest legal settlement. BCBS was awarded \$469 million. The tobacco companies agreed to pay the State of Minnesota millions of dollars every year, forever - an estimated \$2 billion by 2011. The state's money was divided up three ways:

- *Annual payments, the bulk of the settlement dollars, go directly into the state's general fund.*
- *The court set aside 3 percent of the*

*settlement to create a new nonprofit organization, ClearWay Minnesota, to reduce the harm caused by tobacco.*

- *The legislature created two endowment funds and a special account funded by six special one-time payments that were received from 1998 to 2003. The interest earned by these endowments was used to pay for statewide youth tobacco prevention programs and medical education.*

The most visible result from the endowment funds was Target Market, an anti-smoking campaign aimed at teens that began in April 2000. Within two years, tobacco use among middle school and high school students was reduced by 11 percent.

Despite this success, the 2003 Minnesota legislature eliminated the tobacco settlement endowments and the statewide youth anti-smoking programs they funded. All of the money was put into the general fund to offset the state budget deficit. Today, the state has no dedicated source of funds from the tobacco settlement to support statewide programs to prevent youth from smoking.

ClearWay Minnesota and BCBS continue to fund programs to help smokers quit and to reduce the harm caused by tobacco in Minnesota. This funding represents only a tiny fraction of the total settlement.

## HOW TO CONTACT US

Tom Wolff  
Goodhue County Public Health Service  
Phone: (651) 385-6142  
or toll free (800) 950-2142  
E-mail: tom.wolff@co.goodhue.mn.us

Susan Johnson  
Goodhue County Public Health Service  
Phone: (651) 385-6157  
E-mail: susan.johnson@co.goodhue.mn.us



512 West 6th Street  
Red Wing, MN 55066

PRESORTED  
STANDARD  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
RED WING, MN  
PERMIT NO. 378



## Tobacco use in Minnesota continues to decline

According to the latest Minnesota Adult Tobacco Survey (MATS) efforts to reduce tobacco use in Minnesota are working. The data for this survey are collected every four years. The most recent data were collected during 2007 and the analysis was released in September 2008.

The overall adult smoking rate has declined from 22.1 per cent in 1999 to 17.0 per cent in 2007. This 5.1 percentage point decrease represents 164,000 fewer smokers.

The MATS data were collected prior to the October 2007 implementation of the Freedom to Breathe Act changes to Minnesota's smoke-free law. Therefore the impact of the change in state law is not reflected in these findings. The 2007 MATS data do reflect the impact of local smoke-free laws enacted in 15

Minnesota cities and counties prior to the survey.

The smoking rate for young adults age 18 to 24 continues to be higher than the overall smoking rate for adults. In 2003, 36.8 percent of young adults reported they had smoked within the last 30 days. This decreased to 28.4 percent in the 2007 survey.

## Wisconsin in 2009?

Jokes about Wisconsin being the "ashtray of the Midwest" may become obsolete next year. A change in the leadership of the Wisconsin Senate makes the passage of a comprehensive smoke-free law much more likely during the 2009 session. Governor Jim Doyle continues to strongly support a smoke-free law for his state.

## Calling all Southeast Tech alumni

The smoking rate for young adults age 18 to 24 continues to be higher than the smoking rate for all adults (*see story at left*). In an effort to reduce tobacco use among young adults in our county and increase awareness of tobacco-related issues, Goodhue County Public Health Service is working to develop a partnership with the staff and students at Minnesota State Colleges Southeast Tech - Red Wing. Alumni who are concerned about the harm tobacco causes to young adults are encouraged to become part of this partnership.

To get more information Southeast Tech alumni should contact Susan Brace-Adkins (651) 385-6112 or Susan Johnson (651) 385-6157 at Goodhue County Public Health Service.