

North Dakota

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Tobacco prevention important as Great American Smokeout nears

On November 21, the 38th annual Great American Smokeout will encourage everyone to lead tobacco-free lives that will prevent tobacco-related diseases and improve overall health and quality of life. While the event is aimed at getting smokers to quit, Fargo Cass Public Health (FCPH) and the Center for Tobacco Prevention and Control Policy (the Center) focus on ways to prevent tobacco use.

Smoking and secondhand smoke are known causes of cancer, COPD, stroke, heart disease, heart attacks and other serious health issues. Every year, tobacco use kills over 800 North Dakotans and costs \$247 million in annual health care expenses. Several Surgeon General reports have demonstrated that the best way to prevent tobacco-related disease is to never start using tobacco in the first place.

According to FCPH and the Center, tobacco prevention efforts are more important than ever because tobacco companies are finding new ways to market their products to youth. Brightly-colored packaging and fruit-flavored tobacco products that look and taste like candy are used to entice children to try tobacco.

"The number of fruit- or candy-flavored tobacco products has skyrocketed in recent years specifically because they appeal to children," said Holly Scott, tobacco prevention

coordinator with Fargo Cass Public Health. "That's why we focus on prevention, especially at a young age. We want our kids to be smarter than the tobacco companies' marketing ploys."

In addition to brightly-colored packaging and fruit-flavored products, tobacco companies use special discounts and promotions that make their products cheap to buy. Tobacco companies also work with retailers and distributors to make sure these addictive nicotine products get placed in highly visible areas that appeal to youth, such as near candy displays or at the checkout counter.

"Tobacco companies are using whatever tricks they can to get kids to try their products," said Jeanne Prom, executive director for the Center. "Tobacco companies are big businesses and they work hard to replace the thousands of customers who die each year."

According to Prom, the Center is committed to educating the public on the benefits of adopting policies to protect our youth from a lifetime addiction to nicotine.

"One day, we hope to not even need events like the Great American Smokeout because smoking will no longer be a major public health threat," said Prom. "That's why tobacco prevention programs are so important."

To learn more about tobacco prevention programs and education materials, contact Fargo Cass Public Health at 701-241-8576 or visit fargocasspublichealth.com. For more information about quitting tobacco call 1-800-QUIT.NOW (1-800-784-8669) or visit www.ndhealth.gov/ndquits.

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National Smokeout Nov. 21: North Dakota celebrates one-year smoke-free

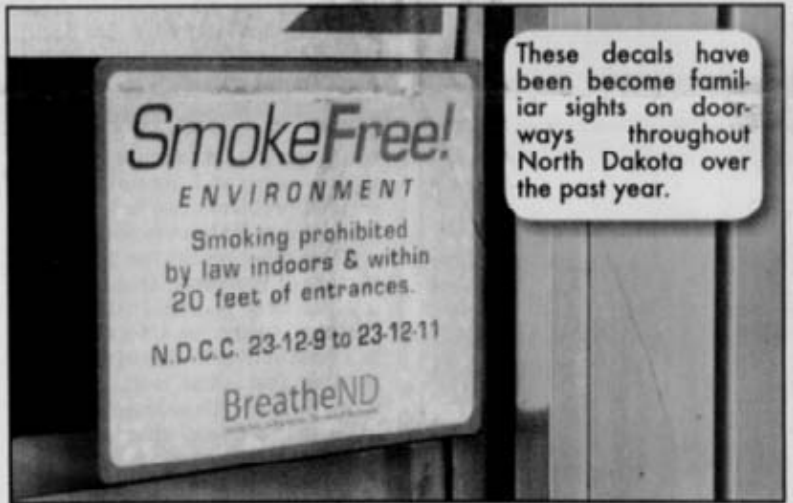
**By Rachel Stanislawski
and Harry Lipsica**

It's been nearly one year since the passing of North Dakota's smoke-free law aiming to protect the health of North Dakotans through clearing the air of secondhand smoke.

"According to the Surgeon General's Report, there is no safe measure of second hand smoke," says Holly Scott, Community Health Educator for Fargo Cass Public Health. "The argument of smoking sections versus nonsmoking sections was no longer validated anymore. The only way to protect people is to provide environments that are 100% smoke free."

The state agreed with the facts after passing the law with an overwhelming 67% of the vote. As of December 6, 2012 North Dakota's citizens gained protection from secondhand smoke in public places and places of employment. How has the passing of this law affected community members and business owners?

"We fielded a lot of questions from business owners on how they needed to comply," says Scott. "We spent a lot of time with media, visiting business owners, pushing information out online, etc. Initially it involved a lot of basic education." The law requires that signs be placed at every entrance



into a facility that's required by law to be smoke free. In addition, no smoking is allowed within twenty feet of entrances, exits, operable windows, air intakes and ventilation systems.

"It was easy to get people to comply with the law," says Scott. "We rely on people in the community to let us know if they see something that is a violation of the law. We count on our business community to be responsible and good stewards of the law, and so far they have really stepped up ... it's

been a seamless transition."

The Red Baron in Casselton is one such business that has been ready for the transition for quite some time. Owner Scott Mensing says, "We have been smoke-free two years before the law even passed. We chose to do that, and the customers have been happy about it being smoke-free. We advertised when we first started that it was smoke-free and I think it's been better for our business."





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Jason Hagemeister, manager of Hagge's in Mapleton, noted that there were questions of how the new law would effect the bar and grill's business. Smoking was allowed in the establishment until the code was enforced more than a year ago.

"We thought we might lose some business from it," he stated.

There, however, has been little to no impact so far, he said. In fact, there has been more individuals coming to Hagge's to eat since the law's enactment.

"There has been an increase in meals," Hagemeister added. "I think it's made for a better atmosphere to eat without the smoke. The law seems to be pretty positive for everyone involved."

Of course, not all businesses are completely happy with the law, but most have found ways to cope with the situation and have moved forward with the transition.

Despite varying opinions on effects on businesses Scott says, "With studies that have been done over the last 10 years, there hasn't been any long-term economic impact with the passage of the smoke-free law."

In time with the one-year anniversary of the passing of North Dakota's smoke free law, the annual Great

American Smokeout will take place on November 21. This day is recognized every year as a time to encourage smokers to make a plan to quit smoking. According to the American Cancer Society, "Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the US, yet about 43.8 million Americans still smoke cigarettes — Nearly 1 in every 5 adults." As part of this day, Fargo Cass Public Health partnered with Generations Connecting in Casselton, and middle school and high school students at Central Cass will have a display available at their school to reinforce the importance of living a tobacco free lifestyle.

To aide North Dakotans in quitting, a ND Quits program facilitated through the state health department is in place and completely free. The program includes phone counseling, web components and texting components. Interested individuals can call 1-800-QUITNOW.

For more information on the Great American Smokeout visit www.cancer.org/healthy/stayawayfromtobacco/greatamericansmokeout. For more information on North Dakota's Smoke-free law visit breathnd.com.