

Smokefree Air Media Report – February 25, 2011

Articles that quote coalition members or mention the coalition

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American Heart Association Pleased Smoke Free Bill Headed To Indiana Senate

<http://newsfromyou.indystar.com/posts/american-heart-association-pleased-smoke-free-bill-headed-to-indiana-senate>

Circulation: 182,933

By: Tim Harms

February 17, 2011

INDIANAPOLIS – The health of thousands of Hoosier workers will improve if the state becomes the 24th to pass comprehensive smoke free legislation, American Heart Association officials said.

Indiana House Bill 1018, which would ban smoking in most public places, recently passed the House of Representatives by a 68-31 vote and is headed for a hearing in the State Senate.

“We’re very pleased to see House Bill 1018 moving to the Senate,” said Winfred Bowen, a heart transplant survivor and the chair of the American Heart Association’s statewide advocacy committee. “Representatives Charlie Brown and Eric Turner have worked very hard to make Indiana smoke free. We thank them for their efforts.

“The onus is now on our state senators to put the health of our fellow Hoosiers as a top priority. Our senators have the opportunity to remove a number of the exemptions in the current legislation and protect Hoosiers who work in every environment, including bars.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, exposure to secondhand smoke for as little as 30 minutes rapidly increases a person’s risk for a heart attack. Smoke causes blood vessels to constrict and reduces the amount of oxygen that can be transported in the blood.

Communities that have enacted smoke free legislation – in Indiana and across the country – have seen dramatic improvements in the health of its citizens and reduced costs for health care.

In Monroe County, hospital admissions for heart attacks in non-smokers dropped 70 percent in the months following a smoking ban in restaurants, retail spaces and workplaces.

After Arizona passed smoke free legislation in 2007, hospital admissions for heart attack, stroke and asthma decreased, resulting in an estimated savings of more than \$16 million in the first 13 months.

“The costs to continue to allow smoking are enormous both in terms of personal health and in health care dollars,” Bowen said. “American Heart Association supporters will be encouraging their local legislators to send the strongest bill possible to Gov. Daniels.”

Senate hearings on the smoke free legislation are scheduled to begin in March.

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Smoking in Indiana: The ifs, ands & butts

<http://www.indystar.com/article/20110221/LOCAL/102210315/Smoking-Indiana-Put-em-out-put-up-?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|IndyStar.com>

Circulation: 182,933

By: Shari Rudavsky

February 21, 2011

SALEM, Ind. -- Ronnie and Phyllis Sons always sit in the smoking section of the Tasty House. That way, Phyllis Sons can have a cigarette right in the restaurant.

"I'd like to sit out there," Ronnie Sons, a nonsmoker, said as he gazed across the room at the nonsmoking side. "But if they have a smoking area, we sit in it."

Ronnie Sons, 71, favors a statewide ban on smoking in public places. His wife prefers that government stay out of her affairs.

Once again, the debate over a statewide smoking ban is before the legislature.

If it passes, no place in Indiana is such a change likely to have a greater impact than here in Washington County. In this rural Southern Indiana county, about 43 percent of adults smoke -- the highest percentage of smokers in any of the state's 92 counties.

In Salem, it's not uncommon to see a woman puffing a cigarette heading into the hair salon off the main square and making no effort to put it out before going inside.

Few people huddle outside public places smoking, as they do in Indianapolis and other cities that have restrictions. They light up inside.

At the Lions Club, a sign near the door thanks people for not smoking. Yes, meetings are smoke-free, said Sharon Purlee, a club volunteer who is involved with anti-smoking efforts. But after official business ends, it's time to socialize, and some members light up -- inside.

Tobacco is an integral part of life in this county of about 27,700 people. It's an hour from Kentucky, a major tobacco producer where the smoking rate is 29 percent and the cancer rate is among the highest in the nation.

As with many farm communities in Southern Indiana, tobacco historically has supplemented incomes. People here start smoking early and continue for 20 years before they try to stop -- if they try to stop at all.

With attitudes so ingrained, changing the smoking culture in Washington County won't be easy.

"We have a lot of teenage parents who when their child gets to be a teenager, they're still young parents, and they are still smoking, and their children smoke as a result," said Dr. Stephen Kemker, chief medical officer of St. Vincent Salem Hospital. "The people here are good people, but they have some bad habits they haven't dealt with yet."

One generation passes the habit to the next, and without intervention, it likely will continue, smoking opponents say.

"When and how did that get to be a part of the culture? I can't say, but not enough has changed there to make it not a way of life," said Karla Sneegas, executive director of Indiana Tobacco and Prevention Cessation.

Ronnie Sons would like to see that change.

"I'd like for (my wife) to live as long as she can. I would like to live as long as I can. I don't want emphysema," he said.

"But you know what? It's supposed to be a free country," interjected his wife of more than 50 years. Phyllis Sons has smoked since she was 12.

Legislating behavior

John Miller said he has tried to quit about 10 times since he started smoking about eight years ago after leaving the Amish community.

An anti-smoking law won't help, Miller said one recent afternoon as he puffed on a cigarette at the Tasty House.

"People have to make up their own minds," said Miller, 33. "You can't pass laws to make them quit."

But some studies suggest that with bans come drops in smoking rates and all of the illnesses associated with smoking.

The County Health Rankings, data tracked by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin, shows Washington County scored 90th out of Indiana's 92 counties on health behaviors, and smoking was a factor.

Although Washington County may lead the state in smoking, it's no outlier. Statewide, 23 percent of adults smoke, and some counties in Northern Indiana have smoking rates of more than 30 percent.

"This is a problem for the entire state," Sneegas said. "We definitely don't have huge pockets of the state that are doing incredibly better on this front."

When it comes to banning smoking, each town, city and county does its own thing. Some communities such as Bloomington and Fort Wayne have passed comprehensive ordinances. Others ban smoking only in the workplace. Because of resistance to a ban, many communities -- such as Washington County -- have done nothing.

Still, many factors separate Washington from other counties without smoking bans.

Hamilton County, for example, does not have a countywide smoking ban, but only 15 percent of adults there smoke. Education could be a reason. More than half of adults 25 and older in Hamilton County have college degrees; in Washington County, 9 percent have that level of education.

The poverty rate in Washington County is almost 14 percent. In Hamilton, it's about 4 percent. Poorer people tend to smoke more. Two cities in Hamilton County, Carmel and Westfield, have ordinances banning smoking in restaurants, although they do not cover bars.

Although education and better income tend to lead to lower smoking rates, experts say, smoke-free workplaces also can have an impact.

"If we don't have policies in place that restrict where smoking can occur, young people grow up seeing smoking," Sneegas said. "And it gives them the cue that smoking is the norm."

Trending toward smoke-free

Things are starting to change in Washington County.

In the past 10 years, the schools have gone smoke-free. The hospital went smoke-free in 2007. The 10 largest employers in the county are smoke-free.

Blue River Wood, a sawmill company, went smoke-free a year ago. As many as 85 percent of its 120 employees were smokers, including Pamela Hudson, the office manager who made the decision about turning the company into a smoke-free workplace.

The company's break room used to be filled with smoke. Nonsmokers often ate lunch in their cars, Hudson said. Now the nonsmokers sit inside, and the smokers congregate at an outside smoking pavilion away from the building.

Hudson braced herself to lose employees, but no one left. She and a handful of other workers even kicked the habit. The new policy helped, she said.

"When I first started working here . . . I could sit at my desk and smoke. When you're a smoker and it's that easy to smoke, you're going to just keep smoking," she said. "The more difficult it is to smoke, the less you will smoke."

Even without anti-smoking ordinances, smoking may be losing its cachet here.

When compared with the rest of the state, Washington County recently had one of the highest percentage of smokers to call the Indiana Tobacco Quitline, said Rhonda Mills, county coordinator for Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation, a state agency.

In August, the Washington County Health Department began offering free smoking-cessation medication and patches. Its supplies ran out in three months, said Peggy Scott, the department's public health nurse.

At this point, the department has no funding to continue the service.

Signs of the change also can be found at the Tasty House. A waist-high barrier and a few stairs separate the smoking and nonsmoking sections. Even on a winter day, three ceiling fans whirl above the smoking section, dissipating the smoke.

Julie Thomas, 52, who needs supplemental oxygen to breathe, will eat at the Tasty House over other Salem restaurants because it has a nonsmoking area.

"This is the only place I would go because you don't smell the smoke," said Thomas, who smoked until she was diagnosed with a lung disorder.

The entire restaurant is now smoke-free for Sunday lunch. Owner Randy Tye said he instituted the policy to cater to the crowd, mostly churchgoers and families with children. Before, the smoking section sat empty at that time.

A smoker himself, Tye said he has no problem with a ban.

"I would have to cut back or quit, which I probably need to do," he said.



EDITORIAL: Smoking ban should be statewide

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/opinion/editorial/article_7900dc62-9fc5-5857-b4a1-69579d6acad5.html

Circulation: 83,877

February 22, 2011

State Rep. Charlie Brown, D-Gary, once more is pushing for a statewide smoking ban, one that has sensible exceptions.

Casinos, bars and tobacco shops are logical exceptions to the ban. Those are places children don't belong anyway, and adult nonsmokers can make their own choice about whether to visit those venues.

But generally speaking, smoking in public should be banned. When someone smokes, anyone nearby cannot avoid inhaling the harmful chemicals the smoker exhales.

Sure, restaurants and other public places have tried to use separate smoking and nonsmoking sections, but that hasn't worked well. The air between the two areas still mixes.

What makes a statewide ban practical is the situation playing out in Lowell and Chesterton.

Lowell officials are weighing exceptions to the town's relatively new smoking ban that are inspired by competition with nearby towns that don't ban smoking. Chesterton officials are waiting for the state to show leadership on this issue before enacting their own ban.

About one-fourth of Hoosier adults smoke. Indiana received more than \$482 million in fiscal year 2010 from taxes on the sales of tobacco and related products, according to the state Department of Revenue's annual report. This is a significant revenue source.

It also should be noted that smoking is costly. A Penn State study in April promoted by the American Lung Association says each pack of cigarettes sold in Indiana cost the buyer an average of \$5.13 yet cost the state's economy \$15.90 — per pack — in direct health care expenditures of \$2.6 billion, workplace productivity losses and premature deaths.

But smoking in private wouldn't, and shouldn't, be banned. In that regard, at least, a person's home is his or her castle. The concern should be for nonsmokers.

Make the statewide ban on smoking in public happen so competition is no longer a factor. There are logical exceptions to this rule — such as tobacco shops, casinos and bars — but protect workers and nonsmokers by banning smoking in restaurants, bowling alleys and other public areas.

Illinois already has a smoking ban, so there's no worry about competition along the state line.

House Bill 1018 would do exactly that. It has been approved by the House and now should meet with similar success in the Senate.

SouthBendTribune.com
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Expanded smoking ban headed for vote – Committee sends it to full council with no recommendation

<http://www.southbendtribune.com/article/20110224/News01/102240314>

Circulation: 62,482

By: Erin Blasko

February 24, 2011

SOUTH BEND — A proposal to extend the countywide smoking ban to include bars, restaurants and private clubs moved one step closer to a vote this week after the Human Services/Criminal Justice Committee elected to send it the full County Council with no recommendation.

The vote was 5-2, with committee members Mike Kruk, D-District E, and Mark Catanzarite, D-District G, opposed.

Petitioner Jill Sabo, executive director of Tobacco Free St. Joseph County, re-introduced the proposal in January after withdrawing an earlier version in November at the recommendation of council attorney Mike Trippel.

At the time, Trippel recommended Tobacco Free SJC reformat the proposal and change the language in certain parts to differentiate between indoor and outdoor public places.

Discussion of the proposal got off to an awkward start when Sabo began advocating for its passage, prompting committee chair Mike Hamann, D-District A, to explain the difference between a committee meeting and public hearing.

That done, committee member Rafael Morton, D-District D, then redirected the focus of the discussion to the changes recommended by Trippel.

Shifting gears, Sabo said Tobacco Free SJC added the word "enclosed" to the section regarding the prohibition of smoking in public places and also re-formatted the proposal utilizing the same legal template used by the state, which is considering its own smoking ban.

"As a point of clarification," Morton said, "if you have (a smoking) ordinance in place, it supersedes whatever is passed by the state."

"That is correct," interceded Rachelle Back, regional director for Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation.

"But only if it is stricter," said committee member Dan Herbster, R-District F.

"Correct," Back said.

Committee member Dale DeVon, R-District C, then asked Health Department administrator Nick Molchan about the current smoking ordinance, at which point the discussion turned to enforcement.

"The difference between this ordinance and the one we have right now," Molchan said, "is that the one we have right now is complaint-based, and this one would not be complaint-based."

Molchan pointed to the part of the proposal that refers to enforcement, which reads: "The Health Department, Fire Department, or their designees shall, while an establishment is undergoing otherwise mandated inspections, inspect for compliance with this Ordinance."

"I understand that to mean we inspect the entire premises for compliance," he said, even if the purpose of the inspection is unrelated to smoking.

Sabo responded that Tobacco Free SJC did not intend for the proposal to create more work for inspectors, and offered to replace the word "shall" with "may," so that the section would read: "The Health Department, Fire Department, or their designees may ... inspect for compliance with this Ordinance."

That satisfied committee members, who then proceeded with the vote sending the proposal to the full council with no recommendation.

The council will consider the proposal at its next regular meeting, which is set to take place at 7:30 p.m. March 8 on the fourth floor of County-City Building.

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Indiana man charged with threatening Gov. Mitch Daniels over smoking ban

<http://www.indystar.com/article/20110225/NEWS05/102250388/Man-charged-threatening-governor-over-smoking-ban?odyssey=tab|topnews|text|IndyStar.com>

Circulation: 182,933

By: Associated Press

February 25, 2011

FORT WAYNE, Ind. -- A northern Indiana man was accused Thursday of mailing letters threatening to kill Gov. Mitch Daniels and the executive director of Indiana's anti-smoking agency if they didn't stop promoting workplace anti-smoking campaigns.

Michael O'Brien, 45, of Howe is charged with threatening to kill Daniels "like John F. Kennedy" and Karla Sneegas, executive director of Indiana's Tobacco Use Prevention and Cessation board, with a baseball bat. He's accused of making the threats in letters sent last August that are filled with profanities and epithets and tell Sneegas: "We are watching you."

Magistrate Judge Roger Cosbey read the charges against O'Brien on Thursday and ordered him held until a detention hearing Tuesday.

According to the criminal complaint, O'Brien told state police he wrote the letters but said the threats weren't serious. When asked why he sent a letter to Daniels, O'Brien said it was because Daniels was raising taxes and pushing an anti-smoking campaign.

"I wasn't going to hurt anyone. I just sent things anonymously," he said.

Daniels and federal public defender Thomas O'Malley declined comment Thursday. It was not immediately clear who was representing O'Brien, and a listed number for him could not immediately be found.

The criminal complaint alleges O'Brien also sent threatening letters to the two most recent coordinators of LaGrange County's anti-smoking program dating back to 2009. The complaint also alleges that a threatening telephone call to the current coordinator was placed Feb. 11 from a telephone booth just outside O'Brien's place of work in Topeka.

General Smokefree Air Articles and Editorials



EDITORIAL: Super Bowl is super chance to change state's image

<http://www.ibj.com/editorial-super-bowl-is-super-chance-to-change-states-image/PARAMS/article/25239>

February 12, 2011

As the ubiquitous Super Bowl XLVI countdown clocks make abundantly clear, in less than a year the eyes of the nation will be on Indianapolis as it hosts the greatest spectacle in football.

And for the next 356 days or so, a lot of time and energy will be spent making sure the city is ready for the spotlight. Not much gets civic leaders' attention like having 5,000 members of the media and 150,000 deep-pocketed fans drop by for a long weekend.

The local host committee already is hard at work ironing out the details members hope will make

the event a success. But there's more to it than keeping traffic flowing and sidewalks clear of snow.

The 2012 Super Bowl is an opportunity to change once and for all the unfair perception of Indiana as a backwater, corn-fed state full of squealing tires and good old boys. It's so much more—a life sciences hub, clean-energy innovator and logistics powerhouse, to name just a few.

But for all those accomplishments, we're still stuck in the Dark Ages in some regards. And here's where legislators could do their part to help by bringing Indiana's laws into the 21st century.

Our General Assembly to-do list reads like a "best of" *IBJ* editorials: Institute a statewide smoking ban. Get rid of antiquated liquor laws. Drop an effort to write the gay marriage ban into the constitution. Forget about heavy-handed immigration reform.

None of these are easy issues, especially for politicians. But they are crucial ones if Indiana wants to continue to break free of its aw-shucks image.

Nearly 30 states—and several Indiana cities—already prohibit smoking in public places, taking a stand against the dangers of secondhand smoke. Indiana needs to join their ranks with a strong law that demonstrates the state's commitment to public health.

To their credit, legislators seem poised to pass a smoking ban this year, but in its current form the bill has far too many exemptions. If we aspire to build our reputation as a hotbed of medical research and life-improving treatment, we need to walk the walk.

Then there are the liquor laws. When Super Bowl visitors are in town, we'll need a special corps of volunteers to explain to them how liquor stores can sell cold beer but not cold mixers, grocery stores are just the opposite, and their coolers had better be stocked before Sunday.

Our liquor laws are complicated and unnecessary—and remind us of Sheriff Roscoe P. Coltrane breaking up the Duke boys' stills in the hills of Hazzard County. Isn't that the impression of Indiana we're trying to erase?

There's a bill pending that would legalize Sunday carryout sales. Naturally, it has plenty of opposition.

These lifestyle issues are important, but hardly the only thing lawmakers have on their plates as they write a new budget, restore the state's insolvent unemployment insurance fund and examine

Indiana's education system. So why bog down the session by tackling hot-button issues like gay marriage and immigration? It's just not necessary.



Now is the time for the state to go smoke-free

http://heraldargus.com/articles/2011/02/18/news/opinion/voice_of_the_people/doc4d5c6143c4d70629008236.txt

Circulation: 11,700

Joel Bazzell – New Carlisle

February 17, 2011

It's time.

Time for Indiana to join the ever-increasing number of states, and countries, that have gone smoke-free.

I'm tired of the legislative games that have gone on in Indianapolis this year. Creating exemptions and loop holes and doing all they can to weaken the current smoke-free bill. It's time for our representatives and senators to do their job and protect the health of Indiana workers.

Toxic air should not be allowed in our bars and restaurants just as toxic waste is not allowed. We are turning our young, healthy workers into pack-a-day secondhand smokers who, through no fault of their own, are getting sick simply because they must go to work. This must stop. We need something done now.

It's time that Indiana catches up with the rest of the country and passes a smoke-free law to protect our workers in restaurants and bars. I urge Senator Arnold to support a comprehensive smoke-free bill.

SouthBendTribune.com
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Smoke-free issue sums up South Bend malaise

<http://www.southbendtribune.com/article/20110217/Opinion/102170355/-1/googleNews>

Circulation: 62,482

By: Michael Brady

February 17, 2011

Make no doubt about it, St. Joseph County is abundant with potential. With such assets as Indiana's only dual-site, certified technology park, the University of Notre Dame amongst multiple higher educational institutions, the Midwest Institute for Nanoelectric Discovery, ND Nano, the St. Joe Valley Metronet and various other economic advancements throughout our county, we have the ability to become one of the most innovative communities in the country. Unfortunately, after being in the national spotlight following Newsweek's recent report that ranked South Bend among the nation's "fastest dying cities," many area residents throughout the county are beginning to question our community's future with more scrutiny than ever.

As a recent graduate of Indiana University, I am now living and working in my hometown of South Bend. Since returning from Bloomington, I have noticed several characteristics about the place I have called home for my entire life that seem to contribute to our brain drain and inability to retain young, college educated professionals. Through the eyes of a 23-year-old, some of these causes are very complex and difficult to decipher, while others are well-documented national and international trends. While no form of government is perfect, I would hope that when a ruling body in any organization runs across an obvious fix, that it would take the proper initiatives to make the appropriate changes. Since quality of life and economic development go hand-in-hand, our elected officials should consider all ways to improve our community.

A perfect example of our community falling short of this simple logic is our inability to adopt a comprehensive smoking ban. After The Tribune's Nov. 20 article, "Smoking group to county: butt out," several of the County Council members' antagonistic reactions to a smoking ban solidifies the argument that we are missing obvious opportunities to improve our community's quality of life. To recap, this article outlined the fears of a few local bar owners if there were to be a smoking ban and how it could possibly have a negative effect on their businesses.

While it is all too easy to subjectively illustrate the great atmosphere provided by the smoke-free bars and restaurants in high growth and vibrant cities like Bloomington, Ind., Salt Lake City, Columbus, Ohio, and Austin, Texas, it should take only simple logic, facts and statistics for an elected official to make an informed decision pertaining to an enforceable countywide smoking ban.

One such statistic that demonstrates my position, that smoking bans do not hurt businesses, can be found in a 2008 report by the Washington State Department of Revenue. This study notes that in 2007, businesses achieved strong gains in gross income, two years after becoming smoke-free. It further outlines that the bars which were feared to be hit the hardest by the laws generated a 20.3 percent increase in gross income in 2007, compared to the 0.3 percent gain in 2006. The law went into effect in December 2005.

Another argument made by a few local bar owners is that workers' rights are not being violated. At the risk of sounding like a health teacher at an elementary school, imagine having to work in an enclosed space where dangerous substances are constantly being spewed into the air. Even worse, your employer does not provide any sort of protection, hazard pay or financial compensation. This is a reality for many bartenders and restaurant staff throughout the county.

The EPA classifies secondhand smoke, along with radon, arsenic and asbestos, as Group A Carcinogens. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 50,000 Americans die each year from lung cancer and heart disease attributable to secondhand smoke exposure. Taking into account that in 2004, the CDC found that the annual health care expenditure solely from tobacco use and exposure was \$96 billion nationally and \$2.08 billion just in Indiana, as a taxpayer in a country that has adopted a universal health care system, I disagree that Americans should have to pay for easily preventable illnesses.

As they should, council members and bar owners have challenged the validity of such statistics that suggest smoke-free laws do not harm businesses, and for that, I commend them. However, simply disputing a statistic and not offering any supporting data from an unbiased source achieves nothing.

I am by no means suggesting that the adoption of a comprehensive smoking ban is the solution to all of our problems; however, it is a tangible step in the right direction. Passing such a law would be an indicator that our community is looking toward the future and not the status quo.

Whether you agree or not with the statistics and methodology that put South Bend, St. Joseph County's largest city, on Newsweek's list of fastest dying cities, we do in fact struggle to retain and attract young, highly educated adults. With that in mind, let's all agree that it is time to move in a new direction. Please contact your county and city elected officials and inform them that it is time for a change and time to start supporting policies that will facilitate our community's ability to live up to its fullest potential.



Business owners get ready for Vanderburgh smoking ban

<http://www.wfie.com/story/14087252/business-owners-get-ready-for-vanderburgh-smoking-ban>

By: Becky Graham

February 23, 2011

VANDERBURGH CO., IN (WFIE) - Some business owners fear a Vanderburgh County smoking ban will hurt their bottom line.

On July 8, Vanderburgh County bars and restaurants will be forced to go smoke free, under an ordinance passed by county commissioners on Tuesday.

Restaurant and bar owners say the commissioners decision to ban smoking will drive their clientele out, hurting them financially, while others say they'll just have to think outside the box when it comes to keeping there customers.

Darlene Young, owner of the St. Joe Inn, one of the eight restaurants and bars that will be affected by the smoke-free switch, worries that being a non-smoking place is going to hurt business.

"It's hard. It's going to hurt us financially, we've already had a lot of people complain," Young said.

Young tell us she's still recovering from the last smoking ordinance that required to separate the bar from the dinning room, and install extra ventilation.

Young says see's the ban's health benefits, but to her, it is all about politics and she's tired of getting pushed around.

Also on the docket to go smoke free is the Hornets Nest.

The Hornets Nest says they've digested the information and have begun to make plans to accommodate smokers.

Owner Derek Ungethiem says that they plan to build a deck out front.

A lot of people 14 News spoke with said they would like to see Indiana pass a statewide ban on indoor smoking, that way everyone could be on fair playing ground.



Vand. Co. Commission Passes Smoking Ban

<http://www.news25.us/Global/story.asp?S=14082030>

By: Mike Fehn

February 23, 2011

VANDERBURGH COUNTY - The Vanderburgh County Commission passes a much talked about smoking ban Tuesday night in a two to one vote.

Several people showed up to the meeting with signs supporting the ban.

Starting July 1st, smoking will no longer be allowed at any Vanderburgh County business outside city limits.

The state of Indiana is also considering a smoking ban, but similar efforts have stalled before.



Lowell considers amendments to smoking ban

http://www.nwitimes.com/news/local/lake/lowell/article_e3a6556d-601e-55a2-ac2b-6e40411c6cc3.html

Circulation: 83,877

By: Melanie Csepiga

February 23, 2011

LOWELL | It looks as if it's going to be easier to light up in this south Lake County town.

The Town Council is poised to approve amendments that will reduce the law's effect dramatically. The most comprehensive smoking ban in Northwest Indiana has been in effect for nearly two months.

Change could come as early as Monday when the council is scheduled to meet.

Councilman David Gard, D-5th, told his fellow councilmen during a special session Tuesday he will make changes to the amendments proposed by Councilmen Don Huseman, D-1st, and Robert Philpot, R-2nd, to be in line with compromises discussed Tuesday. He will prepare them for the councilmen to review individually today.

The council's discussion followed more than an hour of comments from local businesses, private clubs and individuals. Business owners say the law has hurt their business.

While most supported a less stringent smoking ban or none at all, others suggested more time is needed to see its effects.

The negative effects already are apparent at the Rock N Roll OutPost, Country Lanes bowling and American Legion Post 101, their owners and commander said.

"What you guys decide will decide my fate," Martha Vasquez Bozeman, owner of the town's sole bowling alley, told the council. She said her revenue is dramatically down.

"I wish I believed that reversing a smoking ban would bring it back," Gard said of business lost by some local establishments.

Council President John Alessia, D-2nd, said the closure of Rieter Automotive has caused a considerable domino effect on businesses, including bars. The economy in general and January's status as a traditionally slow business month also have contributed to a reduced bottom line.

While council members have yet to vote on any amendments, it appears they will consider exempting standalone bars as well as restaurants with bars as long as the bar is enclosed and clearly separated from the dining area and quality ventilation is provided. Tobacco shops would be exempt as well as businesses without public traffic such as contractors.

Retail businesses would remain under the ban as well as workplaces other than those noted as exemptions.

While the amendments that Huseman and Philpot proposed include an exemption for private clubs, it was unclear Tuesday the direction that change would take.

"Lowell has an interesting situation with a place that's in town, but outside of town," Gard said, referring to Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 6841m which is an unincorporated pocket inside town borders. Local Legionnaires and the local Moose Lodge have said some members have gone there to smoke and drink since the ban went into effect.



St. Joseph County closer to banning smoking in bars

<http://www.jconline.com/article/20110224/NEWS09/110224006>

Circulation: 27,837

February 24, 2011

SOUTH BEND - A northern Indiana county is one step closer to banning smoking in its bars, restaurants and private clubs.

St. Joseph County's Human Services/Criminal Justice Committee voted 5-2 Wednesday to send the proposed ordinance containing the smoking ban to the full County Council, which will consider the measure at its March 8 meeting.

The South Bend Tribune reports that petitioner Jill Sabo of Tobacco Free St. Joseph County re-introduced the proposal in January after withdrawing an earlier version in November at the suggestion of the council's attorney. Attorney Mike Trippel had recommended that the proposal's language differentiate between indoor and outdoor public places.

Last month, the Indiana House approved a statewide smoking ban, but it includes exemptions for casinos, bars, clubs and even nursing homes.



N. Ind. county closer to banning smoking in bars

http://hosted.ap.org/dynamic/stories/I/IN_SMOKING_BAN_BARS_INOL-?SITE=INSEY&SECTION=HOME&TEMPLATE=DEFAULT

February 24, 2011

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