

September 2002

Tobacco Free Lake County

A Breath of Fresh Air.....



Lake County Health Department, *Tobacco Prevention Program*

Volume 1, Issue 1

To Health!

In its commitment to healthier communities Lake County Health Department, Tobacco Prevention Program will be implementing programs relating to tobacco free environment education and policy building in the community. The tobacco education policy will be directed towards schools, restaurants and youth sports; collaboration with youth groups to address tobacco use prevention policies and to serve as a resource to the community on tobacco prevention issues. In an effort to inform county decision makers and interested community members, a quarterly newsletter will be distributed. It

is our hope that we will receive feedback, information and ideas from our targeted readers as collaborative partners in Lake County tobacco prevention efforts.

Our newsletters will feature information and solicit responses on the following issues:

- ☆ Increasing the number of smoke free restaurants in Lake County.
- ☆ Promotion of the awareness and use of our tobacco resources and lending library materials.
- ☆ 100% tobacco free policies in all Lake County Schools.

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- ☆ Consistent enforcement for youth violations of school tobacco policies.
- ☆ Tobacco free policies for youth recreational and sporting events.

Lake County Public Health Talk—Linda Davis, Director

Lake County Health Department submitted a tobacco education proposal in June, and is one of fourteen counties in Montana to receive tobacco prevention education funding this year. Of the \$36,422 the department will receive, only \$8,195 comes from Montana's tobacco settlement dollars. (Currently, Montana only uses 2% of the nearly \$30 million received from the tobacco companies.) The remaining \$28,227 of Lake County's funding comes from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) federal grant on Smoking and Health.

As Lake County Health Department enters its third year of funding for tobacco prevention, we hope to make a difference by targeting tobacco policies and indoor air quality, and assisting workplaces, public buildings, schools and eating establishments to adopt tobacco free policies.

We are especially excited about our tobacco coordinator, Teri Boettcher, and the production of our first newsletter. We hope the newsletter will provide information and raise awareness of the tobacco prevention efforts in your community. And we hope it will provide the reader with a voice to let us know about his or her concerns, or interest. Join Lake County Health Department in promoting a healthier environment for our communities!

Where Has All the Money Gone?

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in Montana. Over 1,400 Montanans die each year of tobacco related disease. That's four people every day! And every day, five new children become regular tobacco users.

Tobacco related health care costs Montanans \$205 million per year, and that doesn't even cover it! Taxpayers pay an additional \$28 million to support Medicaid tobacco related bills.

Tobacco is killing our kids and costing us a fortune.

The tobacco settlement presented states, Montana included, with a unique opportunity to reduce the terrible burden exacted by tobacco on America's families and communities. Montana is failing to keep the promise to use

a significant portion of the settlement funds to attack the enormous public health problem created by tobacco use in Montana.

There is conclusive evidence that tobacco prevention programs not only reduce smoking and saves lives, but also save far more money than they cost by reducing smoking-caused health care expenditures.

Out of 26.3 million settlement payment received by Montana in 2001 only \$500,00 is going to tobacco prevention programs in FY2002. This is 5.3% of the Center for Disease Control's minimum recommendation and ranks Montana 43rd among the states in the funding of tobacco prevention programs.

In early 2001, newly-elected Governor Martz proposed cutting to-

bacco prevention funding for FY2002 from \$7 million proposed by former Governor Marc Racicot to \$1 million, a reduction of 86 percent. The reduction continued to \$500,000 and again to its current amount of \$300,000. The Governor and Legislature took this action despite an intensive advocacy campaign from public health groups and polls which showed the cut was extremely unpopular with voters.

Experience from states that have used the recommended tobacco settlement dollars on prevention programs shows that the following is necessary for success:

1. Adequate funding.
2. Funding must be sustained at recommended levels over time.



Let your legislator know how you feel about issues you care about:

Email: leg.state.mt.us

US Mail: Capitol Station, Helena, MT 59620

Telephone: 406-444-4800

MONTANA

Settlement Payments received in 2001	Annual Funding for Tobacco Prevention	Minimum Annual Recommendation for Effectiveness
\$26.3 million	\$500,000	\$9.36 million

St. Luke's Promotes Healthy Lifestyles...

During the *Relay for Life* in Polson, August 17 and 18 St. Luke's Health Care Network provided tobacco education material and information to the participants and observers. Posters were displayed that showed the perils of tobacco use while visual aids such as the over-sized plastic cigarette with the list of hazard-

ous agents was utilized. Many of the toxic materials in cigarettes are household products such as rat poison and antifreeze which made a visual display easy. Information regarding tobacco cessation was distributed and "Quit Kits" were given to 11 people who expressed the desire to stop using tobacco products.

Approximately 150 people stopped at the information booth. There was an expressed interest in the distribution of tobacco settlement monies in Montana, all were encouraged to contact their legislators regarding this issue.

Thank you St. Luke's Hospital for caring about the health of Lake County residents.

The Best Course of Action

ProtectMontanaKids.org, an initiative of the American Cancer Society, American Heart Association and American Lung Association, recommends pursuing the following policy goals to prevent needless death and disease in Montana:

- Re-establish an adequately funded, comprehensive statewide tobacco prevention

program within the state health department to keep Montana kids from using tobacco and to help those Montanans that do to quit successfully;

- Prevent exposure to the toxins in secondhand tobacco



smoke in the workplace and public areas; and,

- Increase the tax on cigarettes and other tobacco products to help reduce consumption, particularly by kids.

Visit their Web site:

<http://www.protectmontanakids.org>

Approximately 80% of Montana adults do not smoke and will not be financially impacted by a cigarette tax increase

If Montana Increased the Taxes on Cigarettes by 50 cents Per Pack We Could See These Benefits:

- ☆ 4,400 Montana kids alive today would not become smokers.
- ☆ 1400 Montana kids alive today would be saved from smoking-caused death.
- ☆ 4,000 current adult smokers would quit.
- ☆ Over 5 years, \$1.2 million would be saved in health care costs from fewer smoking-affected pregnancies and births, and \$1.5 million would be saved from fewer smoking-caused heart attacks and strokes.
- ☆ \$85.8 million would be saved in long-term state health care costs from reduced smoking.

Number of packs of cigarettes bought or smoked by Montana kids each year - 2.8 million

One proven way for Montana to reduce and prevent tobacco use is to increase the state excise tax on cigarettes. Montana hasn't raised its cigarette tax since 1993. Currently, our cigarette excise tax is 18 cents per pack, the twelfth lowest tax rate in the nation.

**Lake County Health Department,
Tobacco Prevention Program**

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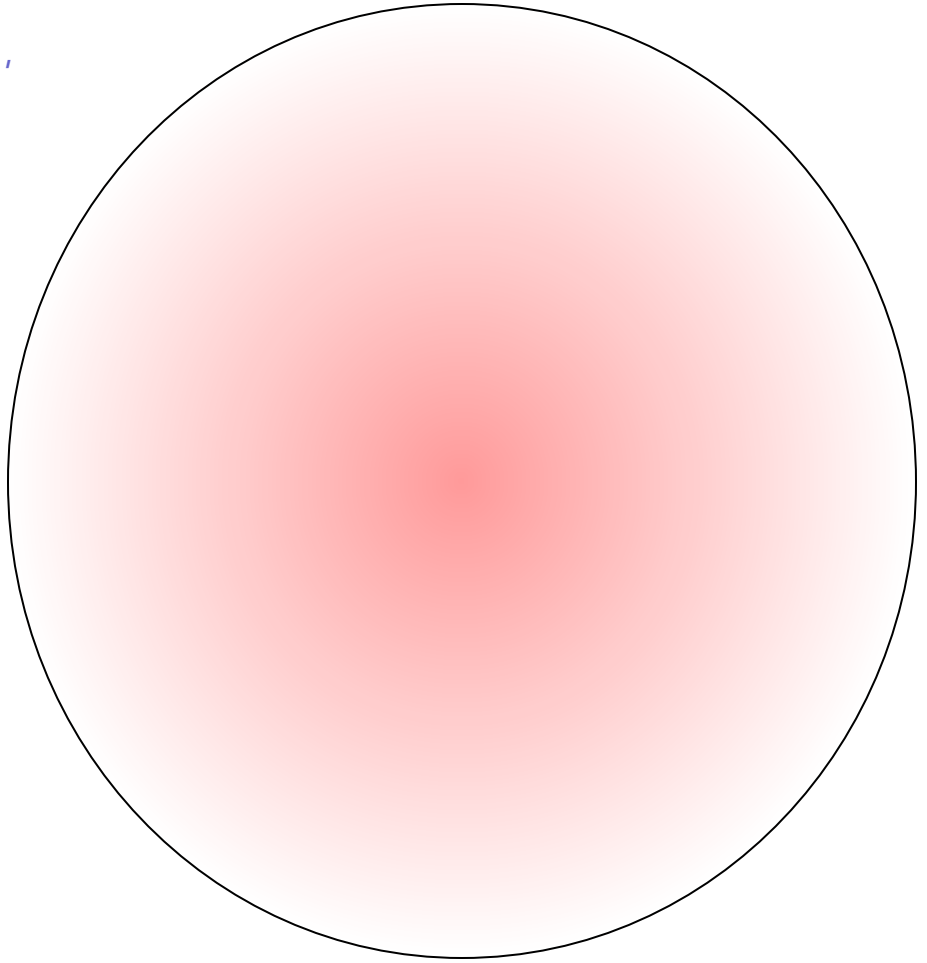
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