



# News Briefs

July 2001

## Youth

>Almost 90% of all smokers begin their habit before the age of 19.

>Tobacco use is associated with alcohol and illicit drug use and acts as a "gateway" drug. It is generally the first drug used by young people who enter a sequence of drug use that can include tobacco, alcohol, marijuana, and harder drugs.

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## Overwhelming Response to 2nd Tobacco Enforcement Program

On April 1, 2001 the Commission solicited all Mayors, Chiefs of Police, County Presidents and Sheriffs to apply for the FY 2002 "Kids Can't Buy 'Em Here" Tobacco Enforcement Program. During the first year of the program, the Commission distributed \$1 million in grants to 141 communities throughout the state. As of May 1, 2001, applications for grants for the second year total over \$1.1 million from 165 communities. "This increase in applications indicates that we have a good program in place," said Mark T. Bishop, executive director of the Commission. "Communities are finding out that our grant program enhances local tobacco control efforts by allowing them to develop a retail education and enforcement program tailored to the needs of their community."

The Tobacco Enforcement Program requires all participants to conduct retail education initiatives including a review of minimum-age tobacco laws, the penalties associated for violating those laws and the importance of age verification through customer IDs. Last year, over 10,000 tobacco retailers received this educational training. The program also requires three compliance checks per tobacco retailer. A compliance check consists of an underage minor making a tobacco purchase attempt in the presence of an enforcement officer.

The cumulative first round compliance rate was 80 percent. The second round compliance rate increased by 5 percent. Initial third round compliance check results continue to show positive trends.

An opportunity that presented itself was to increase the level of participation from smaller communities throughout the state. The Commission felt that the funding rate of \$120 per tobacco retailer for communities with less than 10 tobacco retailers did not adequately compensate the community. The Commission changed the awarding formula to a minimum award of \$1,200 for communities with 10 or less tobacco retailers. This change produced a substantial increase in applications from the state's smaller communities.

The FY 2002 Tobacco Enforcement Program will also include training for the enforcement officers conducting the compliance checks. Once again, the Commission is sponsoring a training class certified through the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board entitled "Conducting Alcohol and Tobacco Compliance Checks." Last year, over 125 enforcement officers participated in one of the five classes offered. This year the Commission is sponsoring 9 classes throughout the state.



## State Compliance Rate Continues to Exceed Target

The 2001 State Annual Survey results indicate that Illinois continues to exceed the federal requirement of 80 percent retailer compliance to minimum-age tobacco laws. This year's rate of 88.5 percent marks the fourth straight year that Illinois retailers have exceeded the required compliance rate. If the state fails to achieve the required rate, a 40 percent reduction (\$28 million) could result in federal funding for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment programs.

The State Annual Survey measures retailer compliance to minimum-age tobacco laws by utilizing underage kids and Commission Tobacco Compliance Specialists in random, unannounced inspections throughout Illinois. The inspections determine whether or not there was an "intent to sell" tobacco products to the minor when they

attempted to make a tobacco purchase. The Commission's first State Annual Survey in 1994 yielded a compliance rate of only 32.9 percent.

"Illinois continues to see consistent and significant increases in retailer compliance due to the diligent collaboration between tobacco retailers, state and local government officials, and community-based tobacco control coalitions," said Mark T. Bishop, executive director of the Commission. "In addition, the Commission's **"Kids Can't Buy 'Em Here"** Tobacco Enforcement Program enhances those community-based efforts. Through the Commission's Tobacco Enforcement Program, 165 communities have applied to receive FY 2002 grants to implement a comprehensive program including retail education initiatives and enforcement compliance checks."



## CONGRATULATIONS GRANDPA MILT LUCAS

Milt has worked as a Tobacco Compliance Specialist for five years in the northern region of the state. Milt spends much of his time assisting communities that participate in the Commission's Tobacco Enforcement Program. His daily activities include conducting retail education classes, training youth participants in conducting compliance checks and assisting local law enforcement agencies in developing their own tobacco control programs.

"If we can educate retailers to correctly check IDs and reduce the amount of illegal underage tobacco sales to minors – we will be able to save lives," states Milt. **"Kids Can't Buy 'Em Here"** program is a wonderful initiative and I am happy to participate."

On a personal note, Milt received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Army after attaining the rank of Sergeant. Milt then spent 32 years in law enforcement with the Cook County Sheriff 's Department and the Illinois Commerce Commission. He shares his life with his wife Pearl of 38 years, and their two sons, a daughter. And just before this newsletter went to press, Milt and Pearl celebrated the birth of their fourth grandchild. Congratulations!



## BERNIE RIORDAN

Bernie is the newest member of the Commission's Tobacco Program and works primarily in the southern Cook County region. "For over 30 years, I served with the Chicago Police Department, primarily in undercover operations," said Bernie. "During that time, I did not get an opportunity to serve the community in the same manner as my uniformed colleagues. Although I'm proud of my service, I did not have the personal contact with young people that I now have with the Commission's **"Kids Can't Buy 'Em Here"** program. When my workday is over, it's uplifting to know I have helped to impact the lives of young people by educating tobacco retailers about minimum-age tobacco laws. I feel more connected to the community when meeting with retailers during retail education classes and assisting police departments during their compliance checks. I am proud to be making a difference in Illinois by lending my experience and talents to this program."

# LEGISLATIVE BILLS

The following legislative bills are related to tobacco control measures and were introduced during the 92nd Session of the Illinois General Assembly. Each bill description is a summary and does not reflect the entire bill text. As of June 1, 2001, none of these bills had passed both the House and Senate.

## SB0449

Amends the Tobacco Products Tax Act by changing the imposed tax on snuff to 37 cents per ounce instead of the current rate of 18% of wholesale price. Status: Held on Calendar Order, Second Reading – Short Debate.

## SB0509

Amends the Municipal Code. Provides that a municipality may provide for the regulation, licensing, and inspection of any retail business or establishment selling cigarettes or other tobacco products, may determine the number of licenses, and may determine the allocation for sales. Status: Re-referred to Rules Committee.

## SB1062

Amends the Municipal Code. Provides that a corporate authorities of a municipality may regulate, license, or inspect a retail establishment that sells cigarettes or other tobacco products. Allows the corporate authorities to determine the location of vending machines that sell cigarettes or other tobacco products. Status: Re-referred to Rules Committee.

## HB0784

Amends the Sale of Tobacco to Minors Act. Restricts location of vending machine sales. Retailer must examine the photographic ID of customers not over 27 years old. Prohibits the sale of single cigarettes. Restricts the location of free sample distribution. Requires certain signage. Requires retailers to obtain a license from the Department of Public Health. Increases penalty amounts. Status: Re-referred to Rules Committee.

## HB3269

Amends the Sale of tobacco to Minors Act. Prohibits sale of tobacco products from self-service displays located anywhere persons under 18 years of age may be admitted. Status: Re-referred to Rules Committee.

## HB1034

Amends the Sale of Tobacco to Minors Act, the Smokeless Tobacco Limitation Act, and the Tobacco Accessories and Smoking Herbs Act. Increase the legal age to buy tobacco products from 18 to 19 years of age. Status: Passed in the House, placed on Senate calendar order of first reading. Status: Referred to Senate Rules Committee; Trotter added as Chief Co-Sponsor.

## HB3162

Amends the Liquor Control Act of 1934. Provides that the state Commission or a local liquor control commission may employ or direct a person between 18 and 21 years of age as an agent to attempt to purchase alcoholic liquor from a licensee in order to conduct alcohol compliance checks. Provides that the state Commission or a local liquor control commission may employ or direct a person between 16 and 18 years of age as an agent to attempt to purchase alcoholic liquor from a licensee in order to conduct tobacco compliance checks. Status: Re-referred to Rules Committee.

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## JACKSON COUNTY LAUNCHES RETAIL CHALLENGE

On February 1, 2001, Jackson County's Health Department and Tobacco Use Prevention Task Force launched a program to challenge tobacco retailers to comply with minimum-age tobacco laws. Twenty-two retailers accepted that challenge. Tobacco retailers earned points for taking positive steps to reduce youth access to tobacco products including employee training, employee recognition programs, compliance check initiatives and the proper display of required signage.

Borowiak's IGA in Murphysboro and Casey's General Store in Elkhart were declared winners by earning the most points. Angie Bailey, director of health education at Jackson County Health Department states, "We congratulate those par-

ticipating retailers for recognizing the need to sell tobacco products responsibly in our communities. We commend them for their efforts to positively impact the health of our children."

The "**Kids Can't Buy 'Em Here**" Challenge is funded through the Tobacco Settlement Fund and provides resources and training to tobacco retailers throughout the county. Jackson County is one of eight counties that elected to participate in the Commission's "**Kids Can't Buy 'Em Here**" Program." Other participating counties include: Adams, Clinton, Jersey, Lake, Lee, Macoupin and Vermilion.