

# Lobbyist takes on fast food industry

By Joe Ruff  
Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A businessman who lobbies against heart-threatening foods has begun a campaign against McDonald's Corp. and other fast-food outlets that he says use too many highly saturated fats in their menus.

Full-page ads were to appear Wednesday in The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, USA Today and at least 10 other major newspapers. They proclaim at one point: "McDonald's, Your Hamburgers Have Too Much Fat!"

Phil Sokolof, an Omaha multi-millionaire who has waged a one-man campaign against highly saturated fats in processed foods, called on McDonald's and other restaurants to reduce the fat content of their hamburger meat by 10 percent.

About five newspapers declined to run the ad. Sokolof said in an interview. The ad singles out McDonald's because it is the industry leader, but Burger King and Wendy's also use too much fat, he said.

The Los Angeles Times turned down the ad because it violates a policy of not accepting advertising that is a direct attack on another company or individual, said Laura Morgan, a spokeswoman for the newspaper.

McDonald's reacted with outrage.

"I think this kind of advertising is sensational, ridiculous, and I think it's reckless," McDonald's senior vice president Dick Starman said from Oak Brook, Ill.

"I'm surprised that McDonald's is singled out because over the years we are the ones who have led the way in reducing fats in our menus," he said. "We think we have the leanest hamburger meat available today."

McDonald's serves 22 million people a day and has 11,000 restaurants in 52 countries.

"I felt that McDonald's represents the fast-food industry," Sokolof said. "They are the number one by far, they set the tone and temper, I believe, particularly catering to children."

"Companies like McDonald's can serve roast beef sandwiches, fruit and vegetables, carrot sticks and skim milk to kids," Sokolof said.

Sokolof, 67, blames high cholesterol for a near-fatal heart attack he suffered 24 years ago. He started the National Heart Savers Association in 1985 and supports it largely through his own contributions.

Wednesday's advertisement states that more than half of all Americans have too much cholesterol in their blood and 25 percent have dangerously high levels.

# Cigarette vending machine ban pondered

By Melissa Jordan  
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The first state to ban indoor smoking except for designated areas is now taking the lead nationally in trying to snuff out cigarette machines — or at least keep them out of youngsters' reach.

Since the St. Paul suburb of White Bear Lake passed the state's first ban on cigarette vending machines in October, at least 20 other Minnesota cities have prohibited or restricted the machines.

The restrictions are part of a grass-roots movement for a smoke-free society, said Jean Forster, assistant professor in the University of Minnesota's School of Public Health.

"It's captured the imagination of local communities," she said. "It's something they can do at their level. There are a lot of places watching what's happening in Minnesota."

A measure pending in Congress, sponsored by Rep. Thomas Luken, D-Ohio, would ban cigarette machines in any location accessible to people under 18.

Testimony at a hearing last year cited a National Automatic Merchandising Association report that only 2.5 percent of teen-age smokers buy their cigarettes from machines.

But advocates of cigarette machine bans say any percentage is significant.

"It may not stop kids from smoking, but it puts another roadblock in the way," said White Bear Lake Mayor Jerry Briggs.

A few other states and communities outside Minnesota have instituted or are considering cigarette machine bans. But Angela Mickel, director

of the Tobacco-Free America Legislative Clearinghouse in Washington, D.C., said the local campaigns in Minnesota are the most widespread she's seen.

"Minnesota is looked at as a leader in health advocacy," she said.

In 1975, the state passed the nation's first Clean Indoor Air Act. The law restricting indoor smoking was a model for laws across the country.

White Bear Lake and Bloomington are among at least eight Minnesota cities banning cigarette machines altogether.

Others have enacted softer restrictions. Redwood Falls bans the machines from "public places." Preston restricts them to places licensed to sell liquor. Excelsior requires that machines be under constant supervision by employees.

The local measures were almost nullified last month when Minnesota lawmakers considered a proposal that would have overridden local restrictions for the sake of consistent statewide regulation.

The bill that passed instead preserves local governments' power to ban the machines while tightening restrictions statewide.

That measure, which awaits Gov. Rudy Perpich's signature, requires electronic locks on machines that a business's employees can activate and requires that the machines be kept where workers can monitor their use.

Walker Merryman, vice president of the Tobacco Institute, a Washington trade association for cigarette manufacturers, said the tobacco industry has taken no position on the matter. "It's an issue that pertains to the vendors," he said.

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ence in the community. We're sending cloth diapers, as well as disposable diapers, home with new parents so they can try them. I think that will make a difference."

The change to cloth diapers by Sacred Heart has led other hospitals in the Eugene area, including McKenzie-Willamette Hospital of Springfield, to consider making a similar switch.

"Right now we're using disposable diapers, but we're checking into using cloth," said Geri Edwards, a registered nurse at McKenzie-Willamette. "I think it's an environmentally sound idea. I think more and

more hospitals will be moving in that direction."

Janice Hill, owner of Heavenly Scent Diaper Service, thinks the switch to cloth diapers reflects a growing trend in the community.

"There used to be only two or three diaper services in Eugene. Now there's five or six," Hill said.

"It used to be it was just cheaper to use a diaper service. Now I get a lot more comments on the environment," Hill added. "I get a lot of calls and comments from people who feel guilty about throwing disposable diapers away."

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