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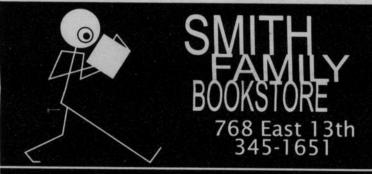
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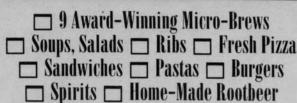
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Smoking ban may be to blame for failed bars

Some bars have complained that the smoking ban has affected their business

Roman Gokhman

Campus/City Culture Reporter

It's another chilly Eugene evening, yet University senior Tom Conner and his buddies are huddled on the steps outside Rennie's Landing near the string of multicolored holiday lights.

While the lights and their smoldering cigarettes may provide a little warmth, the three would rather be inside.

More than a year has passed since some Eugene bars and taverns, which were the last establishments to allow smoking in the entire city, have had to comply with the nosmoking ban implemented by the Eugene City Council, and the consequences are starting to show.

In the past 30 days, two Eugene businesses have closed, including Doc's Pad on East 11th Avenue.

Max's Tavern on East 13th Avenue, which called itself the "rebel bar" in early efforts to fight the smoking ban, has seen much of its business decrease since the ban went into effect.

"It's not the economy," bartender Chad Dooley said. Business "is directly affected by the smoking ban."

City of Eugene Community Relations Director Jan Bohman said the ban was enacted for health reasons, not to protect business's bottom line.

The smoking ban was passed "to protect workers and customers with involuntary exposure to second-hand smoke," she said.

About half of the employees at Max's and Rennie's are non-smokers, but neither they nor the smokers are entirely happy with the rules.

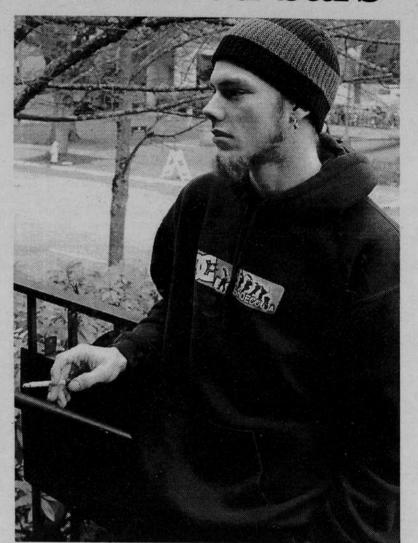
"Their attitude is it's good that they don't smell, but (even the nonsmokers) miss the money," Dooley said.

Dooley said 85 percent of his customers complained after the ban went into effect, and that customers still light up as often as twice a week.

"I feel really bad doing that to our customers," he said.

Bohman said otherwise.

"It would be really hard to prove a case that (lost business) is due to one particular thing," Bohman said. "There have been lot of reasons." Bohman did say she believes at least



Jeremy Forrest Emerald

Jacob Witcraft smokes outside of Rennie's Landing during lunch. Witcraft is from Idaho and isn't used to having to go outdoors to smoke.

one business has closed due to the ban, but did not say which one.

Not all bars are suffering from the ban.

Rennie's, which added a second deck with a fire pit in preparation for the restriction, has seen its business increase in 2002.

"I don't necessarily agree with the politics of the decision, but for our particular case, (the ban has) helped," manager Dan Geyer said.

Rennie's serves breakfast, lunch and dinner, and Geyer said most of his customers appreciate the ban because the smoke no longer interferes with their meals.

Bohman said the no-smoking policy overall has been successful in smoke.

2002, and that fewer than 12 viola-

tions were recorded.

"By and large, people complied voluntarily," she said.

Both Dooley and Geyer believe the City Council should have put the issue to a citywide vote.

"It wouldn't have passed," Dooley said.

The council modeled the nosmoking ban after a similar one in Corvallis. Both bans are different from Oregon's Smokefree Workplace Law, which still allows smoking in bars, tobacco shops, bowling centers and bingo halls.

Contact the reporter at romangokhman@dailyemerald.com.



