

Survey finds most people want their community to be smokefree

Oregonians are committed, more than ever, to protecting their communities from the dangers of tobacco use and secondhand smoke, according to a recent statewide poll by the Oregon Tobacco Prevention and Education Program.

A large majority of respondents supported smokefree policies at most public places including playgrounds, fairs and rodeos, and beaches, especially when children are present. Sixty percent of those polled preferred banning smoking in privately owned cars when children are present. They also expressed broad support for tobacco prevention and education, and funding for programs to prevent youth from smoking and to help smokers quit.

The telephone poll surveyed 600 adult Oregonians across the state. In addition to supporting policies that protect children, the majority of respondents also advocated for smokefree policies at hospitals and government-owned build-

ings. Nearly three-quarters endorsed smoking limits within 50 feet of entrances to hospitals and health clinics. Sixty percent supported such limits at Motor Vehicles Division and county office buildings.

"Smoking affects not only the physical health of a community, but contributes to health care costs and decreases the economic well-being of our state," said Mel Kohn, M.D., state epidemiologist in the Oregon Department of Human Services. "When Oregon's Smoke-free Workplace Law extends to bars, bingo halls and bowling centers January 1, 2009, Oregon will have one of the nation's strongest smokefree policies. But tobacco remains the leading killer in our state, and thousands of people, especially children, are still exposed to secondhand smoke. Clearly, Oregonians want to do more about clearing the air and helping people break the addiction."

The poll found that 89 percent of Oregonians believe that programs to prevent tobacco

use and to motivate and help people to quit smoking are important to the health and well-being of Oregonians. This majority believes it is important to adopt smokefree policies, require insurance companies to help people quit smoking, require licenses for tobacco retailers and give people information on the tobacco industry's deceptive practices. Respondents said these are effective methods to address the problems of tobacco use, protect nonsmokers and keep people from starting to smoke.

On an individual level, eight in 10 Oregonians, including the majority of smokers, said that smoking is never allowed in their home. The majority of respondents reported having been negatively impacted by tobacco use. Fifty-four percent reported having personal experience with, or knowing a friend or family member who has experienced a tobacco-related illness such as cancer, heart disease or emphysema.

The telephone poll was fund-

ed by the Oregon Tobacco Prevention and Education Program, a program of the Oregon Department of Health and Human Services, and conducted by Lake Research Partners, an independent research company. Adults age 18 and older from all 36 counties across Oregon participated. The poll was conducted in January 2008 and has an estimated margin of error of +/-4 percent. Fourteen percent of survey participants said they were current smokers, 36 percent said they had previously smoked and 49 percent said they had never smoked. This closely mirrors Oregon's population, in which 19 percent of residents currently smoke.

The Oregon Tobacco Prevention and Education Program works with local health departments, tribes, schools and community organizations to deliver a comprehensive tobacco prevention program to all Oregon residents. These program activities are based on evidence-based strategies to reduce and prevent tobacco use. For more information, visit <http://www.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/tobacco/>.



May is home improvement month

It's that time of year again. That's right, spring, a time for fresh ideas, new beginnings, and home remodeling. The season also marks the time when homeowners across the country seek out contractors who can turn their dream homes into reality through the process of remodeling. To commemorate May as National Home Improvement Month, the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) offers homeowners a few words of advice for planning their remodels.

Homeowners are advised not to wait until summer to start thinking about making changes to their homes. Finding the right design, choosing a professional contractor, and securing the necessary financing for a home improvement project can sometimes take months, so NARI suggests that homeowners who want to start a project by summer start planning now.

With more homeowners spending more time at home, demand for home improvements have increased, leaving quality contractors booked far in advance. NARI recommends the following steps to help kick-start the process:

- Think your project through from start to finish. Careful planning of your home improvement projects will enable you to update your home, increase the value of your investment and customize your living

space — all for a lot less than the cost of a new home.

- Look over your property carefully. What repairs are needed? What improvements would you like to make? Think ahead and determine your future needs. Professional remodeling contractors can help you in your planning by outlining options and discussing the improvements you can make within your budget.

- Be sure to review your homeowner's insurance policy and make adjustments for the added value of the work being done.

Most homeowners can handle routine maintenance projects and cosmetic touchups, but it's recommended they consult with qualified professionals for larger remodeling jobs and major changes to the home's structure.

NARI is a professional association whose members voluntarily subscribe to a strict code of ethics. Consumers may wish to search www.Remodel-Today.com to find a qualified professional who is a member of NARI.

Consumers can also call the NARI National hotline at 800-611-NARI and request a free copy of NARI's brochure, "How to Select a Remodeling Professional," or visit www.Remodel-Today.com and click on the homeowner's guide for more information.

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