

Clear the Air Media and Educational Campaign Launches July 9, 2012

About the Let's Clear the Air Campaign

The Let's Clear the Air Campaign was created to educate Arkansans about the dangerous health effects of secondhand smoke on workers and the benefits of *comprehensive* smoke-free policies.

The campaign was created by talking with real Arkansans who work, or have worked, in smoking environments, including a bartender, waitress and singer/musician. See their stories on cleartheairarkansas.com.

Everyone deserves the right to breathe clean, safe air regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status or occupation.

The Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke

Secondhand smoke is the smoke exhaled by a person smoking or the smoke that comes from a burning cigarette, cigar or pipe. It contains at least 250 toxic chemicals, including almost 70 that are known to cause cancer. Science has proven that there is NO risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke.

Approximately 50,0000 people die in the United States every year from the effects of secondhand smoke exposure. An estimated 540 adult Arkansans die every year from exposure to secondhand smoke.

Secondhand smoke is a direct cause of asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease, lung cancer, heart disease, and lung and bronchial infections.

Food service workers have a 50 percent greater risk than the general public of dying from lung cancer, and 25 to 50 percent higher risk of heart attack or death from cardiovascular disease according to the American Cancer Society.

The Economic Impact of Comprehensive Smoke-Free Policies

A 2010 study by the University of Arkansas found that businesses in cities in the Southeastern Conference that implemented *comprehensive* smoke-free policies did not experience a revenue loss. In fact:

- *Bars* had an average 25 percent increase in sales tax revenues, relative to those that did not.
- *Restaurants* had an almost 18 percent increase in sales tax revenues, relative to those that did not.

Data from New York City shows business tax receipts for restaurants and bars increased almost 9 percent in the months after its comprehensive law took effect, compared to the same period a year earlier.

Arkansas not having a 100% smoke-free law deters some groups from holding conferences and conventions in our state.

The Arkansas Clean Indoor Air Act of 2006

The Arkansas Clean Indoor Air Act, which passed in 2006, allows exemptions for bars and restaurants that choose to serve people 21 and older, offices with fewer than three employees, and hotels and motels with 25 or fewer guest rooms.

Removing these exemptions from the Arkansas Clean Indoor Air Act will:

- Improve the health of our workforce.
- Protect more Arkansans from the dangers of secondhand smoke.
- Reduce the number of Arkansas lives that will be lost from smoking-related illnesses.
- Decrease healthcare cost to the State.