

# Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition

## E-Newsletter

Supporting Tobacco Control for Kansas

March 2007, Volume 2, Issue 3

Welcome to the TFKC E-Newsletter for those interested or involved in tobacco control in Kansas. We would like to hear your comments and ideas for future issues. See the "Sign Up" information on the previous page to receive this e-newsletter every month.

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## 12th Annual Kick Butts Day Celebrated

Kids across Kansas rallied against tobacco on March 28 as they joined thousands of young people nationwide for the twelfth annual Kick Butts Day, sponsored by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. More than 2,000 events were planned across the nation. This year, Kick Butts Day is raising awareness about the thousands of chemicals in each puff of cigarette smoke and the need for elected officials at all levels to step up the fight to reduce smoking and other tobacco use.

At **Logan Junior High School in Topeka** on March 27, students teamed up with the Seaman District Health Department for a District Wellness Night to celebrate the recent smoking ban placed on the district. Activities included games, peer education and a sign up for smoking cessation classes.

On March 30, the **Cloud County Task Force in Concordia** displayed 1,200 ribbons at the Concordia High School baseball game to represent the 1,200 people who die each day in the U.S. from tobacco and secondhand smoke. Game attendees were given packets of sunflower seeds with information on tobacco use and information on quitting.

## Legislative Update

**Senate Bill 37**, which would ban smoking across the state, will not be coming up in committee or to the floor of the Senate again this year. Proponents in the Senate hope to work on the bill during the interim (roughly May through December) and then bring it back to the Senate committee for a hearing in the next Legislative Session. TFKC supports an interim study of the issue. Any study will be announced by the Legislative Coordinating Council at the end of the current session.

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**Senate Bill 318**, which would allocate expected increases in tobacco settlement funds to tobacco prevention and cessation programs, has been put on hold pending the actual receipt of those funds in April 2008. Tobacco control advocates will continue to demonstrate the need for more funding to help protect youth from initiating tobacco use and help adults stop using tobacco.

## More going smoke free

**New Mexico** has become the most recent state to go smoke free.

**Choice Hotels International** announced that its Comfort Suites brand will become 100 percent smoke-free May 1, 2007. All 433 domestic Comfort Suites, including public areas, will be non-smoking. This move extends Choice Hotels legacy as an industry pioneer in non-smoking accommodations, as in 1984, Choice became the first hotel company to include non-smoking rooms in every one of its properties worldwide. Both Comfort Suites guests and Comfort Suites hotel owners expressed support for the move to a smoke-free brand.

“The extensive survey research we conducted with Comfort Suites guests and our franchisees strongly indicated that going smoke-free was the right decision for our brand,” said Janna Morrison, division president of Choice Hotels. “More and more information is becoming available on the hazards of second-hand smoke — that information is undoubtedly influencing where our guests stay.”

Ten percent of Comfort Suites hotels are already smoke-free. The owners of those Comfort Suites hotels report being positively affected by the smoke-free switch. “Since going smoke free, I’ve been pleasantly surprised, not only have my regular smoking guests remained loyal, but for every potential smoking customer that chooses another hotel, we gain two non-smoking customers,” said Adam Gough, general manager of the Comfort Suites Davis in Davis, CA.

And at **Marriott Hotels** . . . Bill Marrott, on his blog, says “We really received a lot of comments on the blog about Marriott’s decision last year to take all our hotels in North America 100 percent smoke free. That includes Ritz-Carlton, JW Marriott, Marriott Hotels, Renaissance, Courtyard, Residence Inn, SpringHill Suites, our Fairfield Inns, and even our TownePlace Suites.

“One of our very best customers who smokes blogged back to me and said, ‘I’ll never come back to a Marriott.’ Well, that’s a tough pill for us to swallow. But we made this decision because we knew it’s what our customers wanted. And it certainly is what our associates deserved.

“The bottom line is: it’s working for Marriott. Complaints from guests about second hand smoke have dropped 50 percent. We do a guest satisfaction study with our guests and find that our ratings have jumped very, very high on the ‘Room Smells Fresh and Clean’ category.

“Some people argued that we should ban smoking in the public areas and not in the rooms, but that won’t work. We know that the rooms really do smell bad when people smoke in them, and it’s very hard to get the smell out. So we made what we think is the right decision, the best decision we could make to keep Marriott on the move.”

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## Officer Nominations Sought

The TFKC Nominating Committee is taking suggestions for officer or regional representative positions on the board of the Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition. The committee is developing a slate of officers to provide leadership for the statewide coalition. The new terms begin in July.

The officers' positions to be filled are president, vice president, treasurer and secretary, as well as the six regional representatives.

Please consider nominating a tobacco control advocate, or even yourself, to help guide TFKC in the next year. TFKC needs people interested in improving the health of Kansans and reducing the economic and health damage caused by tobacco use in Kansas. If you have any questions or nominations, please contact Mary Jayne Hellebust.

## Congress to Look at FDA Authority over Tobacco

As noted in the last issue, legislation has been introduced in Congress to give the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) authority over the manufacture and advertising of tobacco products with measures that should help protect children from tobacco company marketing and false claims. With these bills in the Senate and House, Congress can provide FDA with effective authority to regulate tobacco products.

This legislation represents a truly historic opportunity to protect our children from tobacco addiction and save lives by addressing the nation's number one preventable cause of death. Organizations such as the American Heart Association, the American Lung Association and the American Cancer Society are promoting the passage of this legislation.

If you would like more specific information regarding what actions are eliminated or restricted by the legislation, please see the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids Web site.

## Make Plans to Attend

A "train the trainers" program for the cessation program of the smoking and pregnancy initiative will be held Tuesday, May 22. The program will originate from Overland Park on the KU Edwards Campus. It also will be available via interactive televideo-conferencing at five sites across the state.

The program is sponsored by KDHE and the KU Med Area Health Education Centers. The five-hour course will prepare individuals in the use of person-to-person and small group counseling for pregnant patients regarding tobacco use and cessation. It will present the "5As" of tobacco cessation. Attendees will receive materials to support their future presentations.

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The programs begin at 9:00 a.m. and will be held in Garden City, Hays, Pittsburg, Salina and Wichita, in addition to Overland Park. There is no registration fee, but pre-registration is suggest to assure space and materials. For more information, contact Becky Tuttle, 316-337-6056, with KDHE.

## Save the Date

The 2007 Spit Tobacco Summit has been scheduled for August 29 at the Hutchinson Cosmosphere. The Summit is focused on youth, tobacco control advocates, oral health professionals, school nurses and anyone interested in making a difference about smokeless tobacco use in Kansas. For additional information, contact Becky Tuttle, KDHE, 316-337-6058, [btuttle@kdhe.state.ks.us](mailto:btuttle@kdhe.state.ks.us)

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