



Richfield Bans Flavors, Caps Licenses at Four

On August 8, 2023, the Richfield City Council voted 3-0 to pass an ordinance that prohibits the sale of all flavored commercial tobacco products, including menthol, and caps the number of tobacco licenses at four. It is the 11th city or county in Minnesota to completely ban flavors, following closely behind its neighbors Bloomington and Edina.

The council heard from five testifiers in support of the ordinance at the August 8th meeting. American Heart Association advocate Mark Olson shared how he got involved in tobacco prevention after having a heart attack 16 years ago. In response to the pro-business arguments against the ordinance, Mark said, "I



Advocates pose outside of the Richfield Municipal Center after the City Council voted to ban the sale of flavored tobacco products on August 8, 2023.

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want kids to be able to live the American Dream...Without this ordinance, it's going to set them up to not even be living to do that." Councilmember Hayford Oleary dubbed this quote "a pretty perfect line" later in the meeting.

Councilmember Hayford Oleary also read a statement from Councilmember Whalen, who could not attend the meeting. Whalen explained his rationale for supporting the ordinance, writing "...banning the sale of flavored tobacco products plus limiting tobacco licenses over time makes sense as a way to prioritize public health."

After voting to pass the ordinance, Mayor Supple and Councilmembers Hayford Oleary and Christensen repeatedly emphasized the importance of choosing public health. The Council also mentioned that the city will be removing tobacco products from its municipal liquor stores. "I do recognize that this does have an effect on small business owners, so I think that is something that we do have to acknowledge here," noted Mayor Supple.

The ordinance takes effect on January 1, 2024.

Mid Continent Management Corporation Launches Company-Wide Smoke-Free Policy

This fall, smoke-free air is the new normal at Mid Continent Management Corporation multi-family housing properties. As of September 1, 2023, a new smoke-free policy applies to all 39 properties and nearly 2,400 units across the Twin Cities metro area, protecting thousands of Minnesotans from toxic secondhand smoke in their homes.

Ongoing issues with the impact of secondhand tobacco smoke on resident wellness and property upkeep prompted Mid Continent Management Corporation's decision to go smoke free; , cannabis legalization in Minnesota and concerns about potential impacts of secondhand cannabis smoke accelerated policy implementation plans. Company leaders hope the new smoke-free policy will help create healthier, cleaner and safer environments for residents, guests and staff.

“Our goal at Mid Continent Management Corporation is to always do the right things by providing housing that supports our residents' wellbeing and safety. We want that for our staff and guests, too. Going smoke free was the obvious choice, especially once we learned about cannabis legalization in Minnesota. Smoke is smoke and we are taking this step to keep the air in our buildings clean moving forward,” said Angie French, vice president of Mid Continent Management Corporation.

This summer, Live Smoke Free attended multiple resident events at Mid Continent Management Corporation properties to talk to residents about the upcoming policy change and connect residents with free smoking cessation support from Quit Partner™, the State's family of programs to help people who want to quit smoking, vaping, chewing or using other commercial tobacco products.

Live Smoke Free applauds Mid Continent Management Corporation for taking this step to protect the health of residents and encourages other housing providers to follow suit. For assistance with adopting a smoke-free housing policy, contact Live Smoke Free at 651-646-3005 or info@mnsмоkefreehousing.org.



Young residents of Wheelock Ridge Villa in Saint Paul play a guessing game with Live Smoke Free staff member Morgan Hamernik during National Night Out on August 1, 2023.

ANSR, Benton County Public Health Present at NACCHO



From left: Katie Engman, Jaclyn Litfin, Jenny Lezer, Mariah Klein, Steve Heinen and Palash Bhanot at the NACCHO 360 Annual Conference in July 2023.

ANSR's Katie Engman, Benton County Public Health's Jaclyn Litfin, Jenny Lezer and Mariah Klein, Benton County Commissioner Steve Heinen and AmeriCorps student Palash Bhanot travelled to Denver for the National Association of County & City Health Officials (NACCHO) 360 Annual Conference on July 10-13, 2023.

During their presentation “Paving the Way: Leveraging Local Values and Best Practices to Successfully Adopt Commercial Tobacco Prevention Policy,” Engman, Klein and Lezer discussed Benton County's 2022 tobacco retail licensing ordinance as a real-world example of these prevention efforts. The conference was a great opportunity to learn from public health professionals from across the country.

An Event-Full Summer

ANSR staff, partners and youth advocates tabled at more than 20 community outreach events this summer to spread the word about local commercial tobacco policy initiatives, smoke-free housing policies and cessation resources. They played tobacco trivia and guessing games, gave away prizes and collected advocacy postcards to send to lawmakers. Here are some highlights from this summer full of events!



ANSR kicked off the season at Recovery in the Park at Augsburg University on May 19, which wrapped up Morgan Hamernik, De'Marco Walton and Gracyn Delaune's first week at ANSR.



Staff had a lot of fun at the first annual Saint Paul Pride event on June 10, but a storm rolled through and everyone was completely drenched in the afternoon!



Live Smoke Free staff Chris Smith and Jack Ayim tabled at the Bloomington Farmer's Market on July 20. Bamboo toothbrushes were a hit!



Live Smoke Free staff Jackie Siewert and Evalyn Carbrey of the Minneapolis Health Department surveyed community members about smoke-free housing at Urban League Family Day on August 26.

We look forward to continuing this work at more community events throughout the fall!

Local Cannabis Action: How Cities are Responding to Legalization



With the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) still in its early stages and adult cannabis use and possession legal as of August 1, 2023, local governments are taking advantage of the limited authority granted to them in state bill HF 100 to regulate cannabis at the city level. Cities are primarily concerned with three areas: public use, cannabis businesses and the sale of edible cannabinoid products.

Public use: In response to concerns about secondhand smoke and clean outdoor air, many cities have amended their city codes to prohibit the use of cannabis and hemp products in public places, including city parks.

Moratoriums on cannabis businesses: HF 100 gives local governments the authority to “adopt reasonable restrictions on the time, place, and manner of the operation of Cannabis Businesses,” but also requires the OCM to work with local governments to develop model ordinances for these reasonable restrictions and to establish additional rules and regulations. Currently lacking this guidance, many cities have adopted an interim ordinance/moratorium prohibiting the operation of cannabis businesses until January 1, 2025 to protect the planning process and health of citizens while studying potential regulation measures.

Edible cannabinoid products: Many cities put one-year moratoriums in place last summer prohibiting the sale of edible cannabinoid products due to unexpected legalization and the general lack of direction from the state. Most of these moratoriums have expired, so cities are adopting ordinances to regulate the sale of these products and establish licensing requirements until the OCM assumes licensing of cannabis businesses.

Youth Advocate Highlight: Kalia & Upendo

ANSR's work wouldn't be possible without the perspectives and efforts of young people. This summer, when youth advocates Kalia Vang and Upendo Gimbi weren't tabling together at outreach events, they were going above and beyond to engage their communities about commercial tobacco in other ways.

Upendo shared resources and swag items with her congregation at Holy Trinity Lutheran in Minneapolis to educate her Swahili-speaking community members about price discounting policy. Kalia serves on the Minnesota Department of Health's Youth Advisory Council and worked with other metro youth leaders on flavored tobacco campaigns and peer education efforts this summer.



A big thank you to Upendo and Kalia for all of their work!

Youth advocates Kalia and Upendo tabled at multiple community outreach events this summer and are quite a team when collecting advocacy postcards.

Nicotine-Free Generation Video is Live!



ANSR interns De'Marco Walton and Gracyn Delaune created a video asking Minnesotans when they want their child to start smoking. Their responses align with the goals of ANSR's newest policy initiative, Nicotine-Free Generation.

Scan the QR code to watch the video and visit nicotinefreegeneration.org to learn more.



Student Action Team

Know a passionate high schooler who wants to make meaningful change in Ramsey County and protect their peers from Big Tobacco? Tell them to apply for the Beautiful Lie, Ugly Truth (BLUT) Student Action Team today! To learn more about this one-year, paid opportunity, scan the QR code or call 651-646-3005 and speak with Molly or Katie.



ANSR Membership Form

Already a member? Not your renewal date? Pass this form along to someone you think might be interested. Share your newsletter. Also, please send in your email address to help us update our records.



I want to help ANSR's ongoing work:

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Donor Spotlight: Why I Support ANSR

Carol Bergh



Bergh testified in front of the New Brighton City Council in 2019.

Carol Bergh is a long-time supporter of ANSR and partner in fundraising efforts. For more than a decade, she has served as the volunteer coordinator for ANSR's annual plant and garage sales, scheduling the volunteer crew and working the sales herself. Her (much-appreciated) dedication and organization help ensure that the fundraisers run smoothly each year.

Carol's contribution to ANSR's success doesn't stop at the plant and garage sales. As a former smoker, she readily advocates for local policy change by sharing about her firsthand experiences with smoking-related illness and secondhand smoke exposure. In 2019, Carol testified in front of the New Brighton City Council when the city passed an ordinance raising the tobacco sales age to 21. The policy protects young people in her hometown from tobacco's harms, and her voice helped it cross the finish line.

For Carol, flavored tobacco ordinances are a no-brainer. "Any time you can pass a ban that stops people from smoking, it's only helpful for the citizens," she says.

Thank You to Our Summer Interns, Gracyn and De'Marco!

ANSR was lucky to have two fabulous interns on our team this summer. Gracyn Delaune is a third-year sociology student at Simmons University, and De'Marco Walton is a third-year communications student at the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

The two were a dynamic duo this summer. They created a video about Nicotine-Free Generation policy and a video in New Brighton, conducted more than 60 store assessments in Ramsey County comparing cities with and without flavored tobacco restrictions, designed a factsheet about mental health and vaping as well as a mental health lesson plan, wrote letters of support for community advocates, tabled at community outreach events, conducted industry research and so much more. A big thank you to both of them for their hard work. We wish them the best as they begin this school year, and are excited to continue working with them on various projects over the coming months.



Interns De'Marco and Gracyn.



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Register for the Prevention Program Sharing Conference Next Month!

The 49th annual Minnesota Prevention Program Sharing Conference is less than a month away! This year's conference theme "Support Connections. Build Prevention. Engage Communities" will focus on collaboration, expanding our networks and supporting health & wellbeing through primary prevention.

The conference will feature a plenary session presented by Amazeworks executive director, Rebecca Slaby, a panel presentation on cannabis prevention in Minnesota and 30 different breakout sessions hosted by community coalition leaders, prevention specialists, educators, researchers and more. Detailed information about breakout sessions and speakers is available on the Minnesota Prevention Resource Center (MPRC) website at mnprc.org/conference/breakout-sessions.

Join MPRC, ANSR and hundreds of other public health professionals at the conference on October 17-18, 2023 at Cragun's Resort on Gull Lake in Brainerd. Register at mnprc.org/conference, and reach out to MPRC's events manager, Madeline Bremel, with any questions: madeline@ansrmn.org.

