SmokeFreeColorado
Good health is good business

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The Smoke Clears as Colorado Becomes the Nation's 13th Smoke-Free State

Toll-Free 24/7 Call Center and Web Site Among Resources Available to Educate Residents and Business Owners About New Law

DENVER – The Colorado Clean Indoor Air Act, the statewide smoke-free law, goes into effect at midnight this Friday, June 30. The law will require most public indoor areas and entryways leading into buildings to be smoke-free, which will create a healthier environment for Coloradoans. Essentially, bars, restaurants, most work places and other indoor public areas will become smoke-free.

To help residents and business owners understand the statewide smoke-free law, a toll-free call center, 1-888-701-2006, and Web site, www.smokefreeColorado.org, are available to provide information and resources. Colorado is the first state to provide residents a call center dedicated to educating them about its smoke-free law.

Seventy-one percent of Colorado residents feel the law is good for the state, according to consumer research conducted in April 2006. Forty percent of smokers think the law is good for Colorado. In addition, consumers plan to patronize restaurants and bars more often once these establishments become smoke-free, according to the research, conducted by Market Perceptions, a Denver research firm. One-third (32 percent) of Colorado residents say they'll eat out at restaurants more often once the smoke-free law takes effect. Nearly one-fourth (23 percent) say they plan to frequent bars more often, and 22 percent are more likely to go bowling once these establishments are smoke-free. Six hundred residents were surveyed in the study.

"We encourage Coloradoans to get out and support their local businesses once these establishments become smoke-free," said Chris Sherwin, executive director of the Colorado Tobacco Education and Prevention Alliance (CTEPA). "Smokers and non-smokers alike will benefit from

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healthier indoor environments, and we should all show our favorite bars and restaurants – as well as ones we haven't perhaps frequented before – that we appreciate their commitment to public health."

When the clock strikes midnight on the night of June 30, bar and restaurant owners are encouraged to be gracious to their smoking patrons while making sure they're aware that the law has gone into effect.

"Any enforcement we do early on the morning of July 1 will be focused on education," said George Epp, executive director of County Sheriffs of Colorado. "We want to make sure bar and restaurant owners and their patrons understand the law and can get answers to any lingering questions."

Tobacco is the leading cause of preventable death in Colorado, where only 18 percent of adults currently smoke. Smoke-free laws are proving to be an effective way to improve public health by reducing people's exposure to secondhand smoke, which has been shown to be harmful to both adults and children and causes about 53,000 deaths per year in the United States.

Two-thirds (67 percent) of smokers in Colorado aged 25 to 34 said they intend to smoke less once the smoke-free law goes into effect, according to the consumer research. A third (35 percent) of smokers in that same age group said they'd be more likely to quit smoking once the state becomes smoke-free.

Other surveys of Colorado smokers have found that 85 percent of them want to quit. The Colorado Quitline, 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784- 8669), is a free telephone coaching service that supports smokers through the quitting process and offers up to eight free weeks of the patch. Telephone coaching with the patch shows a 40-42 percent success rate, versus only 3 percent for Colorado smokers quitting on their own.

Smoke-Free Colorado is a statewide coalition of health and community organizations including the American Heart Association, American Lung Association, American Cancer Society, GASP of Colorado (Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution), Colorado Tobacco Education and Prevention Alliance and the State Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership. Together, Smoke-Free Colorado is working to educate the public about the state's smoke-free law that goes into effect July 1, 2006.

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