



County of Yolo

HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND CITY OF WEST SACRAMENTO



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West Sacramento Adopts Ordinance for Licensing of Tobacco Retailers

Woodland, CA, Nov. 13 – The West Sacramento City Council has adopted an ordinance requiring tobacco retailers in the city limits to purchase a license to sell tobacco. The license will provide sufficient funds for local law enforcement to conduct consistent enforcement of penal and health and safety code laws related to the sale of tobacco products and paraphernalia to minors. The ordinance takes effect Dec. 4, 2009.

Tobacco is a harmful product that is highly addictive and responsible for 40,000 California deaths annually and is the number one cause of preventable deaths. Since 1998, the illegal sale rate of tobacco to minors in West Sacramento has doubled from 14 percent to an alarming 29 percent. This is 19 percent above the state average. As a result, the City Council requested the West Sacramento Police Department (WSPD) to research tobacco retail license ordinances adopted by neighboring communities to address the high illegal sale rate of tobacco to minors.

“West Sacramento is taking an important step towards reducing teen smoking by holding those who sell tobacco to our youth responsible for their actions,” said WSPD Chief Dan Drummond. “What makes this ordinance so special is that it was initiated by West Sacramento teens who saw the high volume of tobacco sales to teens as a serious problem. They wanted to see a change and were willing to do something about it.”

The County Board of Supervisors in 2006, with the City of Davis following in 2007, also enacted similar tobacco retail licensing ordinances. Other communities outside of Yolo County have also enacted ordinances, including Sacramento and Elk Grove. Once these ordinances were enacted, jurisdictions saw their illegal sales rates to minors decrease. The ordinances generate funds for enforcement efforts and add stiff penalties for failure to abide by local, state, and national tobacco laws.

“In order to have a significant impact on the county as a whole, we encourage all of our cities to take this same step,” said Joseph Iser, Yolo County Health Officer.

The WSPD will be conducting an outreach program among tobacco retailers to address the requirements of the ordinance. The license fee will be based on real costs determined by calculating the overall cost of consistent, proactive enforcement and administration and will equal the cost of enforcement annually. The law prohibits the city from making a profit on the enforcement.

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