



A Fresh Perspective

Tobacco Free Cass County

is a dynamic coalition comprised of health-related organizations, individuals, and educational groups working together to strengthen tobacco control and prevention efforts in the Cass County.

Mission

To inform the public about the death and disease caused by tobacco and secondhand smoke and to serve as a resource for stronger standards that protect children from tobacco addiction as well as all of Cass County from breathing toxic tobacco smoke.

Tobacco Free Cass County

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NEW Tobacco Free Cass County Officers

Mary Crosby, *President*
Carol Fadke, *Vice President*
Jenny Steventon, *Secretary*
Gerry Hennessey, *Treasurer*
Joan Friedman, *Coordinator*

Trying to Quit?

Call the Nebraska Tobacco Quitline
1-800-QUIT-NOW
(1-800-784-8669)
www.QuitNow.ne.gov

Embracing Change in Tobacco Free Cass County

A message from Sandy Thomas, Chair

Welcome to our new executive board! The Coalition will benefit from the experience and enthusiasm of new people at the helm.

Congratulations to the youth group for their excellent exhibit at Healthy University at the Plattsmouth Middle School. Not only were they energetic and a big draw for the participants of this annual event but they were presented with the Most Entertaining Exhibitor Award for their efforts.

As I step down as chair of Tobacco Free Cass County, it's time to reflect on what we have been able to do. It has been nine years since I started with the coalition first as the tobacco prevention coordinator and chair then as volunteer chair for the past four years. I remember way back when...I was hired to develop the coordinator position and build grassroots support for tobacco-free environments.

There were milestones along the way that I just knew once those were accomplished, our work would be done. Well, a lot has happened since then. Plattsmouth became the first city in Nebraska to require all retailers to have tobacco products behind the counter or locked in cabinets to prohibit youth access. Many restaurants and venues voluntarily adopted smoke-free air policies then the state of Nebraska adopted the Clean Indoor Air Act which required all workplaces to be smoke-free. Then Cass County commissioners became the first to mandate that all county work sites, vehicles and properties be smoke-free.

But we're still not done. Some school districts still allow tobacco use on their property. Infants and children are still exposed to harmful secondhand smoke and are unable to speak for themselves. There is still much to do. As we continue to make strides in making our communities healthier for everyone, we can look ahead with confidence that our work will continue. Thank you to everyone that has helped me grow as an advocate for tobacco-free environments and for helping our Coalition continue this important work.



Celebrating One Year of Smoke-Free Air *By Jenny Steventon*

June 1, 2010 marked the first anniversary of Nebraska's law prohibiting smoking in indoor workplaces. Many hours were spent educating the public in preparation for the law's implementation. We believed protecting people from the effects of secondhand smoke while in public places was important, and that many, many Nebraskans supported that decision. But we weren't sure how things were going to play out that first week, that first Nebraska football game, or that first cold winter day.

As it turned out, the implementation of the smoke-free air law was relatively seamless. People continued going to bars and restaurants just like they did before the law went into effect. A big reason we had a successful transition was due to the support from the community and the businesses who did what they needed to do to prepare for the implementation.

I hope that the right to breathe clean indoor air will never be taken for granted. Such a simple concept was a long time coming.

For more information, please read "Six Months of Smoke-Free Air: The Nebraska Clean Indoor Air Act", available at www.smokefree.ne.gov.

Tobacco Free Cass County Recognizes Community Leaders

TFCC recognized community leaders who have taken leadership roles in creating healthier, safer, tobacco-free environments in Cass County.

Those recognized include:

Cass County Commissioners: Tobacco-Free County Policy Award

Senator David Pankonin: TFCC Senator of the Year Award

Sandy Thomas: TFCC Legacy Award

Mayor Alan Mueller & the

Louisville City Council: Tobacco-Free City Policy Award



From left: Mayor Alan Mueller, Joan Friedman, Sandy Thomas, Senator Pankonin, and John Baroni.

Tobacco Free Cass County members realize the importance of honoring individuals and organizations that help to address the coalition's goals. These tobacco-free champions have helped make Cass County a healthier place for all who live and visit here.

Tobacco Free Cass County Youth Volunteer Their Time to Educate and Learn

Kidz Explore—Tobacco Free Cass County Youth joined members from the Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition (MOTAC) and Tobacco Free Sarpy at the Mid-America Center on April 17 and 18. The two-day event was a fun-filled opportunity to reach families and educate them on the benefits of smoke-free homes and the dangers of tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure.



From left: Stacy Foster, Brandon Friedman, & Olivia Tonsil quizzed children and adults on the dirty truth about tobacco.



Participating in the largest children's festival in the Omaha area, Dorothy Shamblen awaits the arrival of excited children.

Healthy You University—Healthy You University is a one-day program sponsored by Plattsmouth Middle School. The themes include Tobacco, Heart Health, Nutrition, Exercise & Bullying. On April 1, our Tobacco Free Cass County youth put their education of tobacco prevention to good use. As spokespersons, they educated over 250 middle school youth on cigarettes, chew tobacco, secondhand smoke, big tobacco's lies and the effects of long term tobacco use. Our TFCC youth spokespersons look forward to sharing their knowledge with other schools to educate about the harmful effect of tobacco.



From left: Brandon Friedman and Joseph Essel demonstrate the difference between a healthy lung and a lung diseased by tobacco smoke.

Join our Tobacco-Free Youth Group

Meet other youth who are tobacco-free in Cass County, and get involved in exciting volunteer and activism projects! Call **(402) 740-8260** for more information.

Membership in Tobacco Free Cass County is free and allows for great networking and resource sharing. For more information call (402) 740-8260 or email nosmokejoan@hotmail.com.