



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 22, 2010

Contact: Kim Kaszuba Interim Tobacco Prevention Specialist, PRIDE-Omaha, Inc. 397-3309
Joan Friedman, Coordinator, Tobacco Free Sarpy, 593-3022

Tobacco Compliance Check Failure Rate Decreases

(Sarpy County, NE) – In an effort to reduce secondhand smoke, health disparities related to tobacco, and youth access to tobacco in Sarpy County, the Bellevue Police Department, La Vista Police Department and the Sarpy County Sheriff in collaboration with Tobacco Free Sarpy coalition (TFS) completed its 14th round of compliance checks between October and December 2009. Of 102 retail businesses checked, five sold tobacco to minors. This failure rate of 4.9% is significantly lower than the previous quarter's rate of 9.6%.

Since 2006, Sarpy County officials have teamed up quarterly with cooperating minors in an attempt to check all tobacco license holders in Sarpy County. Minors assisting in the cause use their own identification and make no attempt to look over the legal purchase age. Individuals, organizations, and educational group are at the forefront of fighting tobacco through community action, including TFS in collaboration with PRIDE-Omaha, Inc.

“Regular compliance checks are critical in keeping tobacco products out of the hands of minors and keeping them from starting to smoke and chew,” said Kim Kaszuba, with PRIDE-Omaha, Inc.

Tobacco Free Sarpy is a coalition of health-related organizations, educational and community groups, and individuals. Its mission is to promote and to advocate for healthy tobacco-free lifestyles through public policy, education and enforcement in order to empower the community to advocate for the reduction of tobacco use by changing norms. For more information, visit www.tobaccofreesarpy.org.

###

Funding provided by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services/Tobacco Free Nebraska Program as a result of the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement.