



News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Tobacco Compliance Check Failure Rate Up in Sarpy County

Sarpy County – Tobacco Free Sarpy has completed its tobacco compliance checks of Sarpy County businesses for the first quarter of 2010. Of the 96 retail businesses checked, nine locations in Bellevue sold tobacco to minors, resulting in a failure rate of 9.3% - significantly higher than the previous quarter's rate of 4.9%.

When asked about the increase of failures in Sarpy County, Lt. Russ Zeeb of the Sarpy County Sheriff's Department commented, "These results indicate that we need to stay on top of this and continue our efforts to coordinate compliance checks with PRIDE-Omaha, Inc. Although we had good results the previous quarter, we still have retailers selling to minors."

Since 2006, Tobacco Free Sarpy has collaborated with the Bellevue Police Department, LaVista Police Department and Sarpy County Sheriff's Department, to check all tobacco license holders in the county on a quarterly basis. Cooperating minors assist with the checks, use their own identification and make no attempt to look over the legal purchase age.

"Our intention is that all retailers will realize their role in keeping children safe and drug free," added Mary Crosby, Tobacco Prevention Specialist with PRIDE-Omaha, Inc. and member of Tobacco Free Sarpy.

Tobacco Free Sarpy is a coalition of health-related organizations, educational and community groups, and individuals. Its mission is to promote and 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.

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