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As First Anniversary Approaches, Poll Finds Statewide Smoke-Free Law as Popular as Leading Minnesota Icons

***Law ranks among Walleye Dinner, State Fair, Twins, Vikings, Mall of America
and Pronto Pups***

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn., September 25, 2008 – A new survey released today by ClearWay MinnesotaSM found that as the October 1 anniversary of the statewide smoke-free law approaches, its popularity ranks high among some of Minnesota’s leading icons. The survey found that an overwhelming **77 percent of Minnesotans support the statewide smoke-free law, with 41 percent indicating strong support.** That compares to the popularity rating of walleye dinners (89 percent), Minnesota State Fair (86 percent), Minnesota Twins (83 percent), Minnesota Vikings (77 percent), Mall of America (69 percent) and State Fair Pronto Pups (69 percent). The survey also provides evidence of strong support for the statewide smoke-free law among all leading demographics, including geography, political and ideological affiliation, income, age and gender. The survey was conducted by Minneapolis research firm Decision Resources, Ltd.

“One year after the smoke-free law went into effect, Minnesotans are happier than ever about it,” said David Willoughby, Chief Executive Officer of ClearWay Minnesota. “Not only is the law as popular with the public as the Minnesota Vikings, it’s more popular than State Fair Pronto Pups – and much better for your heart, too.”

Other key findings from the survey include:

- A decisive majority of Minnesotans – 85 percent – view secondhand smoke as a health hazard.
- By an overwhelming margin – 86 to 11 percent – Minnesotans believe that restaurants and bars are healthier for customers and employees now that they are smoke-free.

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- Strong majorities in every part of the state support the smoke-free law (75 percent in the Twin Cities; 81 percent in the west metro; 80 percent in the east metro; 73 percent in northern Minnesota; and 79 percent in southern Minnesota).

In March, the University of Minnesota Cancer Center released a study confirming the immediate and positive health impacts of the statewide smoke-free law on bar and restaurant workers. The study found the workers had significantly reduced exposure to a tobacco-specific cancer-causing chemical found in secondhand smoke after the law’s implementation.

“The Freedom to Breathe Act has been an unqualified success in its first year,” said Willoughby. “Not only is it overwhelmingly popular with Minnesotans, but it has also improved the health of bar and restaurant workers.”

Methodology

The September 2008 study contains the results of a survey administered to 800 randomly selected 2006 voters across the state of Minnesota. Professional interviewers conducted the survey by telephone between September 2-12. The typical respondent took 12 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The non-response rate was 3.5%. The results of the study are projectable to all adult Minnesota residents within $\pm 3.5\%$ in 95 out of 100 cases.

To view complete survey results, visit www.clearwaymn.org.

ClearWay MinnesotaSM is an independent, nonprofit organization that improves the health of Minnesotans by reducing the harm caused by tobacco. ClearWay Minnesota serves Minnesota through its grant-making program, through QUITPLAN® Services and through statewide outreach activities. It is funded with 3 percent of the state’s 1998 tobacco settlement.

For more information on QUITPLAN Services, call 952-767-1400 or visit www.clearwaymn.org.

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