

Tobacco group discovers they invited the wrong guy

RALEIGH, N.C. — Alan Blum, MD, got on the wrong mailing list.

Dr. Blum, a Houston physician who founded Doctors Ought to Care, was invited to the Tobacco Merchants Assn. annual meeting.

"The point is the *Tobacco International* wants you and your company people to come to Raleigh," said a letter from the trade publication to the anti-smoking activist.

So Dr. Blum went. And was asked to leave.

Farrell Delman, president of the tobacco group, offered to reimburse Dr. Blum the \$1,600 he spent to attend the conference.

Healthy for the economy?

RALEIGH, N.C. — The number of tobacco-related jobs grew from 2.48 million in 1985 to 2.64 million in 1990, says a study commissioned by the Tobacco Merchants Assn.

Tobacco contributed \$143.6 billion to the gross national product in 1990, up 50% from 1985, the study said.

California led the nation in tobacco-related employment, followed by North Carolina, New York, Virginia, Texas, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Illinois and Florida.

Controversial, but profitable

Pee Dee, S.C. — Tobacco growers say they plan to hang on to the industry that has a \$746.6 million impact in South Carolina.

The tobacco industry provides 15,128 jobs in the state.

Some 4,000 deaths in the state each year are linked to tobacco.

Making money

BALTIMORE — Revenue was up at this year's tobacco auction, even though the average price was pushed down by a weather-related decline in quality.

In 1991, 9.03 million pounds of tobacco brought an average price of \$1.87 a pound to earn \$16.9 million. This year's 15-day auction earned \$20.7 million on the sale of 12.7 million pounds, selling at an average of \$1.62, according to the Maryland Dept. of Agriculture.

Tobacco support

RALEIGH — Exporting tobacco is the key to success for Southeastern farmers, U.S. Agriculture Secretary Edward Madigan says.

"I've got 105 employees in 105 different countries that are just looking for opportunities for your product," said Madigan at the annual meeting of the Flue-Cured Tobacco Cooperative Stabilization Corp.

Madigan said he and Secretary of State James A. Baker III are the only Cabinet members who chew tobacco, adding that he always carries a plug with him overseas. North Carolina Sens. Jesse Helms and Terry Sanford also spoke in support of tobacco.

UPDATE: TOBACCO

Tax 'em if you smoke 'em

The Coalition for a Healthier Arkansas is working on a petition drive to raise the state cigarette tax by 25 cents per package.

The tax is being suggested as an alternative to a Medicaid excise tax on health care providers. In addition, portions of the estimated \$68 million raised annually would be designated for programs for senior citizens, abused and neglected children, cancer research and educational programs to combat drug, alcohol and tobacco use.

Voters stomp out smoking

FRESNO, Calif. — Voters crushed tobacco industry efforts to kill anti-smoking ordinances in Sacramento County and three other central California communities, but one town tossed its smoking rules out.

People will be able to puff in public in Oroville, but anti-smoking rules were supported in Visalia, Placerville and El Dorado County.

All of the ordinances challenged restrict or ban smoking in public places, including offices and restaurants.

The opposition campaign, which concentrated on Sacramento County, said the ordinance would subject citizens to "cigarette patrols." The \$2.5 million campaign was reportedly financed by major tobacco companies.

County bans smoking

JANESVILLE, Wis. — The Rock County, Wis., County Board passed a ban on smoking in most county buildings, effective July 1.

Non-smoking airport

ST. LOUIS — Lambert Airport has gone non-smoking, with seven designated areas for puffers. In addition, airlines that lease gates and holding areas may designate smoking areas.

Restaurants and bars will also designate smoking and non-smoking sections. All concourses, public restrooms, snack bars, baggage claim areas, ticket counters, shuttle buses and the bus port will be smoke-free.

Message toned down

FRANKFORT, Ky. — An anti-smoking message on a videotape about health problems was toned down for fear that controversy would sidetrack the task force on health care reform.

The video and several others produced by the Cabinet for Human Resources were shown at public forums last month to help illustrate questions on health care.

James H. Newberry, a Lexington, Ky., lawyer and the chairman of the panel, says that the original version of

has a right to a prison environment free from secondary tobacco smoke.

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco ruled in February 1991 in favor of McKinney, saying he had stated a claim for unconstitutional cruel and unusual punishment. In November 1991 the U.S. Supreme Court remanded the case at Nevada's request to the 9th Circuit, but the lower court again ruled in McKinney's favor.

Quitting together

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. — About 200 workers at a television assembly plant are trying to kick the smoking habit. Thomson Consumer Electronics provided a physician on site to write prescriptions for nicotine patches, which are covered under the employees' health insurance.

Smokers' rights

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C. — A bill introduced in the North Carolina General Assembly would prohibit employers from refusing to hire people who smoke off the job.

The chief opponents of the bill are the state's textile companies, led by the N.C. Textile Manufacturers Assn., which says industry studies show that smokers are more likely to develop an occupational illness caused by exposure to cotton dust. North Carolina's worker compensation laws require employers to pay the entire disability award for brown lung, even if smoking played a substantial part in the onset of the illness.

The bill is supported by the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union, as well as tobacco concerns.

More smokers' rights

SACRAMENTO — Most employers can't fire or refuse to hire someone because they smoke, drink alcohol or use another legal consumer product away from work, under legislation passed by the California Senate.

The right-to-privacy bill, sponsored by Sen. Bill Craven, was sent to the Assembly by a 24-0 vote.

Don't smoke and drive

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. — A no-smoking proposal being drafted for city employees here would prohibit smoking in any of the city's 588 vehicles.

The city manager says the regulation, due to take effect in August, is partly based on the 1985 Florida Clean Indoor Act.

But the police union says the policy is excessive. It is threatening to file unfair labor practice charges.

Cracking down on sales

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Using licenses for merchants and tougher penalties for violators, lawmakers are again hoping to enforce state laws prohibiting sales of tobacco to minors.

The legislation, which cleared the

dropped from 6.1% to 4.1%.

Quit for a day

BEIJING — Authorities ordered Beijing vendors to avoid selling cigarettes on May 31 in honor of the World Health Organization's World No Smoking Day. Workplaces were also ordered to begin restricting smoking on the job.

China has more smokers than any other country — an estimated 300 million in a population of 1.1 billion.

Cigarette makers fuming

HARARE, Zimbabwe — Cigarette makers in this tobacco-growing country are fuming over a government campaign to discourage smoking.

The health minister banned smoking in state hospitals and health clinics as part of WHO's day-long observance, then extended the campaign through the week.

Cigarette makers argue that, since the tobacco industry earns most of the nation's export income, pays the largest share of its taxes and employs the largest number of workers, it should be protected.

Farmers grow almost 200,000 tons of tobacco annually, earning \$400 million abroad. Two percent of the crop is used for cigarettes, cigars and snuff in Zimbabwe, where most men smoke.

Compiled from staff and Associated Press reports.

Send news of your group's anti-smoking projects to: Tobacco, American Medical News, 515 N. State, Chicago, Ill. 60610.



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