



PRESS RELEASE

Office of the City Manager

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City of Saratoga Has Effective Tobacco Controls

Saratoga, CA. In the summer of 2012, the City of Saratoga received an “A” grade from the Tobacco Free Coalition of Santa Clara County Community’s Health on Tobacco Report Card for the following efforts:

- In October 2009, the City Council adopted a Tobacco Retailer Ordinance that requires tobacco retailers to obtain a conditional use permit and limits the density of tobacco retailers near each other, schools, and City parks.
- In September 2010, the City adopted a Smoke Free Recreational Areas ordinance that prohibits the use of tobacco products in City parks and recreational areas.
- The City has also worked with the Sheriff’s Department to conduct tobacco decoy operations on a random sample of 20% of its tobacco retailers to ensure that they are not selling tobacco to minors in Saratoga. Businesses have been 100% compliant during recent decoy operations.
- The City also continues to increase its public awareness about its ban on smoking by erecting “No Smoking” signs at all City parks and producing newsletter articles reminding the community about the ban of tobacco use in specific areas.

“The City of Saratoga and the Sheriff’s Office care about the youth in our community,” said Captain Ken Binder of the Santa Clara County Sheriff’s Office. “I am pleased that Saratoga businesses were in 100% compliance for all compliance checks and decoy operations conducted. Saratoga businesses have a history of doing the appropriate thing.”

The Community’s Health on Tobacco Report Card evaluates cities annually based on their effort toward complying with federal and state requirements, strength of policies that prevent tobacco sales to minors, and enforcement of laws that prohibit tobacco sales to minors. Cities also receive additional points in the report card for community education efforts, stronger local tobacco control policies affecting the retail environment and for conducting additional tobacco prevention enforcement. This is the second year that the City of Saratoga has received an A grade from the Tobacco Free Coalition of Santa Clara and believes that this rating provides an accurate reflection of the City’s efforts toward tobacco use prevention and protecting youth from tobacco.

In early January 2013, the American Lung Association (ALA) in California released its annual "State of Tobacco Control 2013." In this report, local governments are graded based on their policies that promote smoke free outdoor environments, smoke free housing, and reduce sales of tobacco products. Saratoga received an average "D" grade this year and has received this grade since 2009. Of the 15 cities in the County of Santa Clara, 13 received either an "F" or a "D" grade. Of the remaining cities in the County, one received a "B" while the other received a "C." The full report is available online at <http://www.stateoftobaccocontrol.org/state-grades/california/>.

Unlike the rating system used by the Tobacco Free Coalition of Santa Clara County, the ALA in California evaluates cities based on whether the cities have adopted standard policies or ordinances that it believes reduce tobacco use. Cities are graded on how many of the prescribed policies and laws that they have adopted. The City believes that the ALA in California's scoring system is unrealistic, because cities are not graded on their ability to address the unique tobacco-related issues that exist within their community or the effectiveness of their efforts to reduce tobacco use or exposure to secondhand smoke.

The City is fortunate that it has health-conscious residents and tobacco use has not been a significant problem in the Saratoga community. The City has adopted policies to restrict the use of tobacco in Saratoga and continues to enforce these policies. The City will continue to monitor its policies and procedures on tobacco use and will consider adopting new policies to address any new tobacco related problems that may arise in the community.

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