



PRESS RELEASE

Office of the City Manager

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SARATOGA CONTINUES TO BE A PARTNER IN CREATING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES THROUGH TOBACCO CONTROLS

The City of Saratoga supports the American Lung Association's effort to create healthier communities. There is no denying the American Lung Association's positive impact across the country to improve lung health and prevent lung disease. The City continues to be a local partner in this greater effort.

While the City of Saratoga applauds the mission of the American Lung Association, the City has once again received a failing grade as part of the Lung Association's "State of Tobacco Control 2015 – California Local Grades" report. Saratoga is not alone as many other government agencies in the Bay Area and across California have received similar grades. However, the City would like to take this opportunity to highlight actions it has taken to strengthen tobacco controls.

"Saratoga is one of the healthiest cities in California," Mayor Howard Miller said. "I'm proud of the efforts that Saratoga has taken on tobacco controls over the last 10 years. We have made tremendous strides with our tobacco policies for our parks and retailers, along with keeping tobacco products out of the hands of minors."

The City is fortunate to have health-conscious residents. Tobacco use has not been a significant problem in the Saratoga community. The City has also worked with the Sheriff's Department to conduct tobacco decoy operations on a random sample of Saratoga's tobacco retailers to ensure that they are not selling tobacco to minors in Saratoga. Businesses have been 100% compliant during recent decoy operations.

On January 21, 2015, the Saratoga City Council directed staff to prepare an ordinance establishing special regulations and enforcement measures for tobacco retailers. A number of California communities with tobacco retailer licensing laws have seen a decline in tobacco product sales following adoption of these licensing requirements. At the same meeting, the City Council also directed staff to prepare an ordinance banning the use of e-cigarettes wherever smoking is prohibited in Saratoga. Although these efforts were not taken into account in the Lung Association's current report, they should have a positive impact on the City's grade in next year's report.

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Past policies and actions are summarized below:

- 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.
- In October 2009, the City Council adopted an 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.
- The City has increased 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 will continue to monitor its policies and procedures on tobacco use and will consider adopting new policies to address any tobacco-related problems that may arise in the community.

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