

Highlights of the 2006 Secondhand Smoke Survey for Wilkin County, Minnesota

November 2006

STUDY DESIGN: A telephone survey of 340 randomly selected households was conducted in Wilkin County, Minnesota, in September of 2006. A random sampling design was used to ensure a representative sample of respondents within the county with an error rate below 5% and a confidence level of 95%. The sample also was designed to allow for independent analysis for the city of Breckenridge. However, in order to keep the costs of data collection manageable, a sample size of 180 respondents from Breckenridge was used resulting in a confidence level of 90%. The overall response rate for the survey was 67%.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY: Key objectives of the study were to a) assess respondents' attitudes and perceptions of secondhand smoke and b) determine their opinions of public policies related to secondhand smoke. For detailed results of the study, see the report entitled *2006 Secondhand Smoke Survey for Wilkin County, Minnesota*, available at www.ndsu.edu/sdc/publications.htm.

KEY FINDINGS:

1. Distribution of smokers in Wilkin County

- < In 2005, one-fifth of adult Minnesota residents smoked, either regularly or occasionally, and the proportion of adult smokers has declined slightly since 2001 (see Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data at www.cdc.gov/BRFSS). The smoking status among respondents is:
 - 15% smoke cigarettes or use other tobacco products on a regular basis.
 - 5% occasionally smoke cigarettes or use other tobacco products.
 - 24% used to smoke cigarettes or use other tobacco products, but quit.
 - 56% have never smoked or used other tobacco products.

2. General issues regarding Wilkin County

- < The majority of respondents are pleased with their county's economic health and leadership.
 - 79% are pleased with the county's economic health.
 - 78% are pleased with the decisions of their county leaders.
- < Results from a previous study of Wilkin County residents (see report entitled *Secondhand Smoke Survey for Central and Western Minnesota: February 2005 Survey Results* available at www.ndsu.edu/sdc/publications.htm) show that:
 - 48% agreed that people in their county seem resistant to change.
 - 59% believed that people in their county are somewhat informed about issues regarding secondhand smoke.

3. Smoking and secondhand smoke issues

- < The majority of respondents say that secondhand smoke bothers them, and the vast majority agree that people and employees should be protected from secondhand smoke.
 - 67% say that exposure to secondhand smoke bothers them a lot or a fair amount.
 - 94% agree that people should be protected from secondhand smoke.
 - 93% agree that restaurant employees should have a smoke-free workplace.
 - 81% agree that bar employees should have a smoke-free workplace.

4. Government's role in secondhand smoke policy and policy preferences

- < Respondents' responses to prioritizing various issues underscore the difficult decisions Wilkin County policy makers have to make.
 - **Regarding public health issues:**
 - 79% of respondents place a high level of priority on customers being able to breathe clean, smoke-free air in bars and restaurants (15% place a high priority and 64% place a very high priority).
 - In contrast, 19% place a high level of priority on people who smoke being able to smoke

- in bars and restaurants (8% place a high priority and 11% place a very high priority).
 - When asked to choose between the two issues, the choice was clear - 75% say clean, smoke-free air for customers should take priority.
- **Regarding workplace environment issues:**
 - 76% place a high level of priority on protecting employees by requiring smoke-free work environments (15% place a high priority and 61% place a very high priority).
 - 50% place a high level of priority on business owners being allowed to regulate whether the work environments are smoke-free (12% place a high priority and 38% place a very high priority).
 - When asked to choose between the two issues, the choice was still clear - 59% say protecting employees should take priority.
- < Respondents favor passing an ordinance prohibiting smoking in all indoor public places, including workplaces, public buildings, offices, restaurants and bars.
 - 68% favor passing an ordinance prohibiting smoking in all indoor public places (31% favor and 37% strongly favor).
- < Respondents believe that Wilkin County policy makers' decisions should protect the health and safety of the general public and employees.
 - 95% believe that secondhand smoke is a health issue.
 - 87% believe that air quality inside restaurants, bars, hotels, etc., should be regulated in the same way as safe and sanitary food and lodging.
 - 87% believe that Wilkin County policy makers should pass laws that protect public health and safety.

5. Economic impact of a smoke-free ordinance

- < Respondents were asked to indicate whether they visit bar facilities (i.e., *bars that serve limited food items* or *bars that do not serve food items*). Bar facilities in Wilkin County currently allow smoking.
 - 46% of respondents visit these types of facilities (44% visit *bars that serve limited food items* while 17% visit *bars that do not serve food items*); in contrast, 54% of respondents do not visit these types of facilities.
- < A useful measure of the economic impact of a smoke-free ordinance is an assessment of the perceived change in customers' use of facilities. Keep in mind that approximately 20% of the potential market is comprised of current smokers.
- < Respondents were asked to indicate how various types of facilities becoming smoke-free would affect their use of those facilities. Contrary to perceptions of a negative impact on businesses, responses show that for each type of facility, the proportion of respondents who would choose to visit a smoke-free facility *more often* or it would not make a difference outweighs the proportion who would visit *less often*. Among the respondents who visit these types of facilities, the proportions are as follows:
 - *Bars that serve limited food items* - 37% would visit more often while 7% would visit less often; 56% said going smoke-free would not make a difference.
 - *Bars that do not serve food items* - 19% would visit more often while 18% would visit less often; 64% said going smoke-free would not make a difference.
- < Respondents who indicate there are certain facilities in Wilkin County they are NOT visiting because they allow smoking would visit the facilities if they became smoke-free.
 - 15% of respondents indicate they are NOT visiting certain facilities because they allow smoking.
 - Among respondents who indicate there are certain facilities in Wilkin County that they are NOT visiting because they allow smoking - 71% are NOT visiting *bars that serve limited food items*, while 56% are NOT visiting *bars that do not serve food items*.
 - Among respondents who indicate there are certain facilities in Wilkin County that they are NOT visiting because they allow smoking - 87% would visit *bars that serve limited food items* if they became smoke-free, while 81% would visit *bars that do not serve food items* if they became smoke-free.