



**Organization:** Prevention Resource Center in Springdale, AR

**Contact:** Laurie Reh

**Q: What did you change a law, a regulation, an ordinance, a policy or other?**

**A:** Our goal was to change behavior and attitudes toward tobacco smoke and encourage community “readiness” for policies that protect the public from secondhand smoke. By delivering a consistent message, public attitudes about the acceptability of exposure to tobacco smoke would change, and support would be gained for a smoke-free community.

In May 2003, the Fayetteville City Council brought up the measure to pass as a resolution. Throughout the next three months, the City Council reviewed the issue and engaged in public debate. On September 2, 2003 the Fayetteville City Council passed an ordinance that prohibits smoking in all workplaces, including restaurants and their attached bars. Although there was a subsequent referendum, the advocacy paid off and on February 10, 2004 voters upheld the ordinance. The Northwest Arkansas Tobacco Free Coalition (NWATFC) has been continually involved in education regarding the implementation and enforcement of the ordinance in order to preserve and sustain the success of clean indoor air in Fayetteville.

**Q: Where did the idea to make the change originate?**

**A:** Fayetteville passed a smoke free ordinance in 1991. By 2001, Fayetteville was one of the only communities in Arkansas with an ordinance on the books. The original ordinance that passed in 1991 made all public places smoke free, excluding restaurants, bars, bingo halls, and bowling alleys. The ordinance did not specifically include “workplaces,” yet it was a strong foundation for a more comprehensive ban. Fayetteville seemed more prepared for and receptive to a comprehensive ordinance.

In 1996, the NWATFC formed and began training members in smoke free advocacy, as well as creating a slow drip of education to the community about secondhand smoke. Around 2000, the coalition members began meeting with the Fayetteville City Council and talking about the need for smoke free restaurants. As the community became more aware, they began to advocate for smoke free workplaces and a stronger ordinance.

The concept of smoke free was gaining momentum as members of the NWATFC continued outreach to the community. In 2002 NWATFC held a press conference to announce that they were a recipient of a grant from the Arkansas Department of Health’s Tobacco and Prevention and Education Program. The activities within the grant included creating smoke free environments. Although the word “ordinance” was not mentioned, a great deal of focus

was on worker safety and secondhand smoke exposure. The press announcement served as a catalyst for the smoke free campaign and stirred public interest.

**Q: What elected or other government officials did you meet with to accomplish this change? And at what point(s) in the process did you meet with them?**

**A:** The Mayor and all the Aldermen on the City Council were invited, along with the general public, to various community forums that were offered to explain the health risks of secondhand smoke and the need for smoke free workplaces. There were one-on-one meetings with each of the Council members in the early days of this process, again, to educate and increase awareness about secondhand smoke.

**Q: What materials did you use to make your case that the change was necessary and would produce the desired results?**

**A:** NWATFC initiated two community forums to gauge community readiness, gain media exposure, improve visibility, and expand the impact of grassroots educational efforts. Press conferences were also held to present scientific evidence of the need for smoke free workplaces. Speakers included youth, cancer survivors, physicians and concerned citizens.

As the advocacy efforts intensified, an adjunct group was formed with an independent funding stream. NWATFC registered the new organization, Smoke Free Fayetteville, with the City of Fayetteville as a separate non-profit organization with lobbying rights. Smoke Free Fayetteville was able to phone bank registered voters and supporters, as well as attend ward meetings and city committee meetings to encourage City Council members to support the smoke free ordinance. NWATFC would continue to parallel these efforts with education in the community and technical assistance to City Council members.

**Q: Through what system/process did you make your change?**

**A:** Our formal plan was to move the community and coalition along a linear path, or progressive steps that would assist grassroots efforts toward policy planning. These steps included increasing the number of organizations and individuals involved in planning and conducting community-level education; conducting assessments that look at community readiness for policy change, routes to identify supporters; development of local and regional counter-marketing campaigns to place pro-health messages that inform, educate, and support local tobacco control initiatives and policies; and finally, the development of the community tools needed to advocate toward the elimination of exposure to secondhand smoke, which in turn will encourage local community leaders to adhere to the adoption of public and private tobacco control policies.

**Q: Who were your allies in making this change?**

**A:** Our allies were local health care providers, physicians, nurses, and other community partners who were able to present scientific evidence of the dangers of secondhand smoke, and the effectiveness of policy in reducing health hazards associated with exposure to tobacco smoke. Another partner, the University of Arkansas, Sam M. Walton College of Business and the Center for Business & Economic Research was able to offer professional analysis on the sales tax data and economic outcome of clean indoor air laws. Most

important were concerned citizens who were able to voice their support for clean indoor air, and engage in volunteerism.

### **Q: Who opposed this change?**

**A:** Challenges to clean indoor air policy adoption included: local business opposition groups who used bad science to combat strong educational campaigns, the tobacco industry who funded locally based organization to raise public alarm about the economic impact of clean indoor air policies and government intrusion. The organized oppositional group for our area called themselves “Free Choice Fayetteville,” a take off from our subgroup called “Smoke Free Fayetteville.”

### **Q: Did you testify in front of local boards or state governing bodies?**

**A:** The opportunity to testify came once the ordinance was written and the City Council agreed to three readings in advance of their vote. The topics addressed focused on secondhand smoke health issues, advantages of smokefree work environments, worker safety, community health, economics, youth concerns, nationwide trends, advantages of policy changes, and personal stories.

### **Q: Did you participate in media advocacy to make your change?**

**A:** Messages from numerous and varying media sources conveyed information about the economic and health impact of second-hand smoke. Paid media included print ads, radio spots, television ads, community events and media events. Media advocacy (earned) was used to engage the community through letters to the editors, media events, guest appearances on radio talk shows and TV shows, and editorial board meetings.

At community events and health fairs, coalition members gathered signatures, assembled lists of supporters with their contact information, and then established an extensive electronic database that was used for email distributions and educational direct mailers to residents, restaurants and local decision makers.

NWATFC provided substantial media coverage in all major media outlets. A consistent message about the dangers of secondhand smoke was provided in public service announcements, television segments, paid ads, print coverage, events and letters to the editor. Coalition members spent time meeting directly with editors and other media personnel to influence their support for a smoke free policy, prompt the publication of feature articles and purchase space for educational ads.

### **Q: Please describe in detail the outcome of your change.**

**A:** Restrictions of smoking in enclosed public places and work places are needed to protect the health and safety of citizens of Fayetteville and to ensure the right of nonsmokers to breathe smoke free air. The original proposed ordinance read that all workplaces and public places in Fayetteville would be smoke free, including restaurants and bars, thus providing full protection for all Fayetteville residents, workers and visitors.

Policy makers and City Council members did not feel there was enough support from the community to include bars in the smoke free ordinance. Our understanding of need changed. Despite extensive education about the need for smoke free bars - the community of Fayetteville was not ready for an ordinance this broad; change in public attitudes about

the acceptability of exposure to tobacco smoke in bars had not been met. Social change takes time.

The amended ordinance prohibits smoking in ALL workplaces within Fayetteville city limits, including restaurants and their attached bars, but excludes stand alone bars, outdoor patio areas and tobacco retail stores. The amended ordinance was widely accepted.

Policies encourage communities to develop social norms that promote tobacco-free lifestyles, encourage smoking cessation, and decrease youth smoking initiation, all of which will positively impact the health of Fayetteville residents.