

## Council Approves Citywide Smoking Ban

*"Smoking is a privilege, and  
breathing is a necessity..."*

*Councilman John Ed Pennington*

The Manchester City Council approved a ban on smoking in public places in the city Monday night.

"Smoking is a privilege, and breathing is a necessity," said Councilman John Ed Pennington, after going on record as sponsoring the smoking ban.

The city council voted unanimously to pass the ban against smoking and met applause from local citizens in doing so.

"Did we do a survey or check with businesses?" asked Councilwoman Dorothy Sizemore.

"I've not talked to a single soul who's been against the ban," says Mayor George Saylor.

Rhonda Bowling with the Clay County Health Department said that over 100 businesses in Clay County are already smoke free.

"So many people asked us to please pass something to make public places smoke free.

I only met a few places who had strong opposition against the smoking ban, but they said they would comply if there was an ordinance," said Bowling.

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Bowling said that all state owned buildings is already smoke free.

City Attorney Scott Madden said there was an ordinance on the table with the county to make all public places throughout the county smoke free as well, but the issue has not yet been voted on.

Gerardo Selano, a local, asked if the city had considered making an exception for bars and restaurants where the ordinances may hurt revenues there.

"The state doesn't like to exempt anything. The only thing is a tobacco store, and they have to sell 90 percent of tobacco products," said Saylor.

Dr. James Rice, who is chairman of the Cumberland Valley District Board of Health, said that he had reviewed reports that smoking bans increased revenue in businesses.

"Shouldn't it be their right, if you own a business. Seems like we're taking away freedom," said Councilman

Mark Deaton.

"We are taking away the smokers' rights, but like Rhonda said, there are hardly any businesses that allow people to smoke anyway," said Mayor Saylor.

"If you do it, you're taking away the smokers rights, but if you don't do it, you're taking away the non-smokers rights," said Pennington. "Non-smokers shouldn't have to be subjected to second hand smoke."

"If we do this, they don't have a choice," said Deaton.

"81 cities have smoking bans," said Pennington.

Councilman Terry Wilson asked how the ordinance would be enforced.

"If this district thing Dr. Rice mentioned is passed, you'd have enforcement," said Madden.

Bowling said any issue involving public health, the health of the public usually trumps individual rights.

Manchester Memorial Hospital

CEO Dennis Meyers said the hospital has had great success with their recent move to be smoke free.

Dr. Rice said that the Clay County Health Department has been non-smoking since 2007.

"There were some initial complaints from the employees, and that was within the first 30 days. Since then, we've had compliance," said Rice.

Bowling addressed city council to talk about the ACHIEVE Grant, which is to promote a healthier Clay County.

Bowling said a Community Development person from the University of Kentucky has been hired to create a health plan to implement environmental change.

"We're looking at what the community needs to make quality of life more livable," says Bowling.

Every third Thursday of the month, the Healthy Clay Coalition group meets at the Clay County Health Department at noon for a healthy lunch and discussion on how to improve.