

SUCCESS STORY



Written By: Torie Andrews, Baker County's Tobacco Prevention Education Program Coordinator

Baker City passes ordinance for smokefree city parks...

...which all started with a simple question a year ago. "Do any of the parks have a designated smoking area or are there any rules regarding smoking or use of tobacco?. This email was sent to the City Public Works Department on February 12, 2013. Two days later I received a response from the City Manager and someone had just introduced this idea to the city council. It appeared that the time to pursue this healthy venture was now. It was time to start creating a culture of health in Baker City.

Collecting Information

Partnerships were quickly being built in an attempt to present the ordinance before city council and have it approved by July, the busiest time of year for the city's park system.

What we knew:

1. Baker County is the least healthy county in the state.
2. Baker County has some of the highest smoking rates in the state (adults & teens.)
3. Baker City has been in strong opposition to tobacco-free/smokefree ordinances in the past.

What we could do:

1. Prepare information about the harmfulness of secondhand smoke.
2. Assess the public to determine the level of approval to such an ordinance.
3. Write Letters to the Editors and find Champions/Personal Stories to share.

"Make city parks non-smoking facilities, and enforce it!"

- Public Responses to Baker City's Community Parks and Pathways Survey

"It was time to start creating a culture of health in Baker City."

*"Should Baker City ban tobacco products in city parks?: YES 121 (51%)
NO: 116 (49%)*

- Results from Baker City Herald's Website Survey.

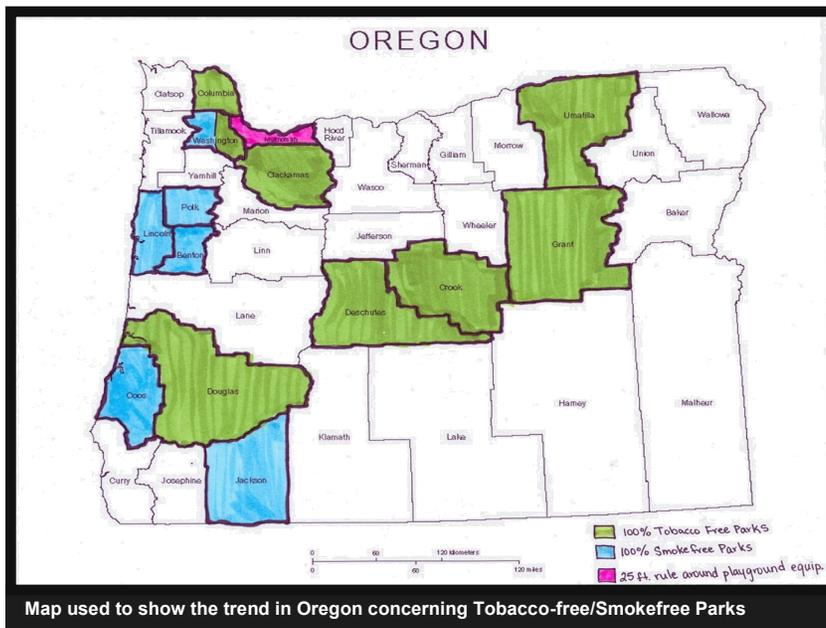
BAKER CITY
On the Historic Oregon Trail. Established 1874

Smokefree Parks
May 14, 2013

CHECK-LIST

- ✓ Call every TPEP Coordinator in the state who have TF or SF parks and see how things are going.
- ✓ Have clear concise talking points that all members of the team clearly understand and communicate.
- ✓ Try not to take things personal (easier said than done.) Changing the social norms of a community is never easy.

Presentation to City Council in May 2013.



Preparing for the vote

So much time and energy was put into the presentation to City Council. Obviously there were City Council members strongly opposed, some who were neutral, and some who were Champions. The dates of City Council meetings were May 14, June 25, July 9, July 23, and August 9. All votes to continue moving forward on smokefree parks were passed 5-2. Then came the final vote on August 9, 2013. Could Baker City move forward creating a culture of health with City parks? Is it possible that a "rural" community would take the lead and establish a complete non-smoking parks system? I was almost positive (ok like 99% sure) that the vote would end with an approved ordinance. All in favor, 3 (not too bad). All opposed...

Sometimes things don't go as planned

...3. The motion to pass the third and final reading of the Ordinance failed with a vote of three in favor and three opposed. My heart dropped, it's hard to watch, a seemingly obvious end to painstaking work.

After the initial shock, I was still positive about all the public education and partnership that went into this creating this ordinance. All of this work was not in vain and wouldn't return void.

Receiving a call back

I had moved on. I was giving this ordinance a break. Maybe next year I could tread lightly on the idea and stir up the partnerships and champions again to go before the city council. But for now I would move on towards Tobacco Free County Campuses and Retail Assessments. This was my thinking until I was scrolling through the agenda of an upcoming City Council meeting in December. Lo and behold what do I see...number 8 on the agenda...Ordinance 3326 Prohibiting smoking in the City parks. It's coming back?!? A few days later I received my call back, the champion on the city council wanted me to come back and speak. And I did. And to my excitement the ordinance passed the first reading. A month later (January 14th) the second reading was passed. My mind kept reeling, how did this happen? Who brought this back? I had given up for the time being. The Mayor of Baker requested that this ordinance be brought back to city council because it had ended in a tie vote.

VICTORY!

On January 28th, 2014 I streamed our city council meeting at home on my computer. The ordinance was scheduled #10 on the agenda and 2 1/2 hours later it was time to vote. All in favor...4. All opposed...2. IT PASSED 4-2!! In 3 quick minutes the vote took place and a new ordinance was created. What an amazing feeling!

Baker City has adopted an ordinance that extends to all Baker City Parks including the Leo Adler Parkway, which runs through the entire City. A change is happening in Baker. One small step for changing the social norms.

A change I am now apart of.

Lessons Learned

- Don't give up. It may take months or years but diligent work doesn't return void.
- Meet regularly with champions and define clear and concise talking points.
- Be prepared. Gather as much information as possible and memorize. Know your information!
- Don't be afraid to ask for help. See what other counties or Coordinators are doing. What worked and what hasn't.
- Don't stop the momentum. Continue moving forward, the work is never done.

