

## Lake County Tobacco Free Park and Property

### Success Story

By Lilli George, North Lake Public Health Department

Saving lives is important to members of the Silver Lake Fire Department. But saving lives means more than responding to emergencies; this group of volunteers recognizes that creating healthier environments for children and others will help save lives in the future. Because of their dedication to health and well-being; as of May 2014, The Silver Lake Park and all property of the Silver Lake Fire District have been declared the FIRST in Lake County to become tobacco-free. Board president, Tom Roark considered it a “no-brainer” pointing out that tobacco-free properties not only helps protect people from exposure to second hand smoke but also reduces the risk of fire in the station and in the woodchips under the playground equipment throughout the park which is adjacent to the fire district property. Another plus will be a reduction in litter from cigarette butts in the playground area.

Providing a place for outdoor recreation and enjoyment that protects residents (and pets) from secondhand smoke and shows youth that tobacco use is not the norm benefits the entire community. Clearing the air of secondhand smoke helps ensure equal access to our parks for people with asthma and other respiratory conditions. Statistics from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) prove that tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death and chronic illness in the United States and Lake County is no exception. According to Lake County Public Health’s Tobacco Prevention coordinator Lilli George, RN, 20 residents die from tobacco related causes each year and nearly 1 in 20 Lake County residents suffers from a serious illness caused by tobacco. George applauds the Silver Lake Fire District and Park board for leading the way to promote cleaner, safer and more beautiful environments now and for generations to come.