



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Minneci's Goes Smoke-Free, Joining a Growing Trend Public Health to Award Smoke Free Recognition Certificate on April 13

"We tried just doing weekends for a while, but decided to go for it full-time."

—Joseph Minneci, owner, Minneci's

CHAMPAIGN – Minneci's, at 401 S. First St., Champaign, is now a smoke-free restaurant. Owner Joseph Minneci chose to make his restaurant smoke-free this week, adding his establishment to a growing list of eateries that are getting rid of their smoking sections altogether.

Mr. Minneci said he can sympathize with people wanting to smoke during a meal, but he felt he had to do what was best for everyone.

"I still want smokers to come in, but they will have to refrain from smoking," he said.

"We are very excited by Mr. Minneci's decision to become a smoke free establishment," said Nikki Hillier, coordinator of the Illinois Smoke Free Restaurant Recognition program in Champaign County. "Again, we're seeing local restaurant owners supporting clean air initiatives. Interestingly, there have been seven restaurants to open or go smoke free in the last 2 years. At least five of those are locally owned. Many would like the city to establish a consistent city-wide policy first. Yet many restaurateurs such as Mr. Minneci feel that being smoke free is important enough to move forward with – whether the city acts or not."

“We applaud Mr. Minneci for going smoke free, and while it might seem that the trend will eventually continue until all restaurants go smoke free, only about four restaurants a year join the list of smoke free establishments in Champaign-Urbana. At this rate, it will take 35 years to get 80% of hospitality establishments to eliminate their smoking sections. So, the market is not fixing itself.”

At 1:15 p.m. on Thursday, April 13, representatives of Public Health will give Minneci’s a certificate from the Illinois Smoke-free Restaurant Recognition Program. This statewide program recognizes restaurants that have gone entirely smoke free and raises public awareness to the dangers of exposure to second-hand smoke. Establishments choosing to participate in the program receive the certificate and are listed on the Department’s web site (<http://www.idph.state.il.us/tobacco/smoke-freelisting.htm>). Minneci’s will also appear in the Champaign County Smoke Free Restaurant Guide.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has determined that second-hand smoke cannot be reduced to safe levels indoors. Workers in businesses that allow smoking indoors are at a greater risk for heart attacks, cardiovascular disease, cancer and respiratory disease. Patrons of such businesses also suffer the ill effects of exposure to second-hand smoke.

Both the Champaign County Public Health Department and the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District have voted to support a resolution calling for the elimination of second-hand smoke in public places.

The text of the resolution, sponsored by the C-U Smokefree Alliance, is provided below.

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Resolution to Eliminate Secondhand Smoke in Public Places

Whereas, the U.S. Surgeon General has determined that simple separation of smokers and nonsmokers within the same air space does not eliminate the exposure of nonsmokers to secondhand smoke.

Whereas, numerous studies have found that tobacco smoke is a major contributor to indoor air pollution, and that breathing secondhand smoke is a cause of disease in healthy nonsmokers, including heart disease, stroke, respiratory disease and lung cancer. The National Cancer Institute determined in 1999 that secondhand smoke is responsible for the early deaths of 65,000 Americans annually.

Whereas, the Environmental Protection Agency has determined that secondhand smoke cannot be reduced to safe levels in businesses by high rates of ventilation. Air cleaners, which are capable of filtering the particulate matter and odors in smoke, do not eliminate the known 5,000 chemicals - including arsenic, cyanide and formaldehyde and other toxins - in secondhand smoke.

Whereas, employees who work in smoke-filled businesses suffer a 25-50% higher risk of heart attack and higher rates of death from cardiovascular disease and cancer, as well as increased acute respiratory disease and measurable decrease in lung function.

Whereas, smoke-filled workplaces result in higher worker absenteeism due to respiratory disease, lower productivity, higher cleaning and maintenance costs, increased health insurance rates, and increased liability claims for diseases related to exposure to secondhand smoke.

Whereas, there is conclusive proof that smokefree air laws do not have adverse economic consequences for businesses subject to them; moreover, there is much evidence that smokefree air laws have a positive economic effect on those businesses.

Be it therefore resolved, that the undersigned organization endorses the C-U Smokefree Campaign, which will work to:

- Protect the public health and welfare by prohibiting smoking in public places and places of employment
- Guarantee the right of nonsmokers to breathe smoke-free air.

Be it therefore resolved, that the undersigned organization will:

- Inform its members and the general public of its endorsement of this Resolution
- Inform local elected officials of its endorsement and urge its members to do the same.
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– Champaign County Public Health Department and Champaign-Urbana Public Health District

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