



January 26, 2009

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information:

Megan Franklin, Tobacco Prevention Specialist, PRIDE-Omaha, Inc., 397-3309 (w) 990-9531 (c)
Vickie Young, President, Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition, 451-6241 (w) 990-3111 (c)

More Tobacco Products Being Sold to Minors

Omaha – The illegal sale of tobacco products to minors increased in Douglas County during the last six months of 2008, with the non-compliance rate jumping from 6.4% to 7.5%.

“The increase in tobacco sales to minors is a trend that will be addressed by MOTAC,” said Vickie Young, president, Metro Omaha Tobacco Action Coalition (MOTAC). “Research indicates that the earlier young people start to use tobacco, the more likely they will become addicted to the deadly product,” noted Young.

MOTAC collaborates with the Omaha Police Department and the Nebraska State Patrol to conduct regular tobacco compliance checks in the county. Attempts are made to check each tobacco license holder once every quarter. Cooperating minors who help conduct the checks, use their own identification and make no attempt to look over the legal purchase age.

“We hope that retail tobacco license holders will continue to educate their employees about the proper procedures for selling tobacco products to ensure that these dangerous products are kept out of the hands of our youth,” said Megan Franklin, prevention specialist, PRIDE-Omaha, Inc.

PRIDE-Omaha, Inc. helps to coordinate tobacco compliance checks, in collaboration with the MOTAC. MOTAC is a dynamic coalition of health-related individuals, organizations, and educational groups that is at the forefront of fighting tobacco through community action. For more information on tobacco prevention efforts in Douglas County, visit the MOTAC Website at motac.org.

-30-