

Arkansas press events raise awareness of smoke-free cars law

On Thursday, May 6, 2010, the Arkansas Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program (TPCP), partnered with state law enforcement agencies and tobacco control coalitions to increase awareness and enforcement of Act 13. Also known as the Arkansas Protection from Secondhand Smoke for Children, the Act was passed in 2006, and was the first of its kind. Since then, similar laws have been adopted by Louisiana, Maine and California.

To demonstrate the harmful effects of secondhand smoke on children, three press events were held simultaneously in Fayetteville, Jonesboro and Little Rock, Arkansas. With assistance from Dr. Neil Kleipeis, an Environmental Scientist from Stanford University in California, TPCP was able to demonstrate that smoking in a car makes dangerous particle levels rise within seconds of a cigarette being lit. The levels can exceed the hazardous limit on the Environmental Protection Agency Air Quality Index by 20 times or more.

The law makes it a primary offense to smoke in a car carrying children under the age of six and weighing less than 60 pounds. Violators can avoid a fine on a first offense if they enroll in a program to quit tobacco. In the coming months, a video of the events will be made available to all interested parties.

For more information, visit stampoutsmoking.com. To enroll in a program to quit tobacco, call the Arkansas Tobacco Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.