

Store 'powerwalls' crumble as part of anti-smoking plan

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Staff Writer

One of the tobacco industry's best tools for addicting young people, the powerwall, came tumbling down this past Saturday.

Powerwalls are the colourful retail displays that have traditionally been front and centre in stores throughout the province.

"I applaud the Ontario government's ongoing efforts, through the implementation of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act and its retail display ban, to improve our health by preventing children and youth from starting to smoke, helping residents quit smoking and protecting Ontarians from involuntary exposure to second-hand smoke," said Halton

Regional Chair Gary Carr. "These goals mirror our own efforts to work with partners to provide safe, healthy, liveable, and inclusive communities in Halton."

The ban comes as part of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act, introduced in June 2006, to protect the health of all Ontarians by prohibiting smoking in all enclosed workplaces and enclosed public places in the province. Under the Act, a complete ban on the retail display of tobacco products came into force this past Saturday (May 31), which was also World No Tobacco Day.

While local businesses in Georgetown Market Place are adhering to the regulation Sarfaraz Moosa of International News doesn't think it's going to be good for his business.

"I don't think it's a good idea. This is my

business, I want to display everything," said Moosa who now has cigars and cigarettes hidden in a case.

Moosa believes sales of cigarettes will be affected in the "short-term."

"In the long-term once they get used to it I don't think it will affect (cigarette) sales a lot," said Moosa.

But he does think the retail display ban will have a definite impact on the sale of cigars, which now also must be out of sight in the store. He said cigars are often an impulse buy, and if shoppers can't see them, they won't think to buy them.

Andrew Kim of Delrex Variety spent about \$1,000 to cover up the cigarettes on display at his store about a month ago, an expenditure he says

he would rather not have had to make.

"I don't think it will impact sales," said Kim.

Dr. Bob Nosal, Halton's Medical Officer of Health said, "the ban on retail displays means children and others will no longer be exposed to tobacco industry advertising near corner store cash registers."

"Many young people who begin to use tobacco do not fully understand the consequences. Limiting access to tobacco products, along with ongoing awareness and education efforts, should act as a powerful and timely deterrent," said Nosal.

A research report released last week by Joanna Cohen, a professor in the Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Toronto and Principal Investigator with the Ontario Tobacco



Theresa Kim of Delrex Variety in Georgetown Market Place, opens up one of the covers on the power-wall in the store, hiding the tobacco products, as required by the new provincial regulations. Photo by Ted Brown

Research Unit, found that tobacco promotions, such as powerwalls, were common in stores across Ontario, and were found more frequently in convenience stores closer to a school.

Store owners and manufacturers have had two years to prepare for the new legislation. In Halton, the Ministry of Health Promotion and the Halton Region Health Department have been working with vendors to ensure effective implementation of the Act. As of May 31, the Smoke-Free Ontario Act prohibits all retailers from displaying tobacco products in any manner that will permit a customer to view them before completing a purchase.

Studies show that the more people are exposed to point-of-sale advertising and pro-

motion of tobacco products, the more likely they are to buy tobacco.

"We want to protect our children," said Nosal.

"By putting cigarettes out of sight, this legislation will help prevent impulse buying of cigarettes, typical of young people and those who are occasional smokers or trying to quit. With this legislation and community support, we'll be taking a very positive step towards increasing the protection of people in Halton from second-hand smoke and prevent more young people from smoking," said Nosal.

For more information on the tobacco display ban, call Halton Region at 905-825-6000, toll free 1-866-4HALTON (1-866-442-5866), TTY 905-827-9833, or visit website at www.halton.ca.

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Students get the anti-smoking message

Students at Georgetown District High School received a large Smoke-Free Ontario banner last week which will be displayed at various events to help remind students of the perils of smoking. Prior to the presentation, speaker Adam Doan delivered an audio-visual presentation on the ways the tobacco industry

entices young people to take up smoking. On hand to unfurl the banner were (from left) GDHS teacher Michelle Armstrong, Rebekka Bond, Jenna Petit, Gwen Hodgson, Hannah Nichols, Rachel Armstrong, GDHS health nurse Sylvia Dawe and Doan, representing Halton Region. Photo by Ted Brown

It's Recreation & Parks month!

Town of Halton Hills' Recreation and Parks has been registered as an Ambassador for Recreation & Parks Month and will be promoting various recreational activities related to the June-long initiative.

The purpose of June is Recreation and Parks Month (JRPM) is to draw attention to the benefits and values of recreation to individuals, families, neighbourhoods and communities. The month's theme, 'Live it Everyday', encourages people to participate in Recreation and Parks programs, services and facilities— everyday. It is an opportunity for municipalities, schools, businesses, community clubs, individuals, and others to get out there and celebrate what Ontario communities have to offer.

JRPM calendars feature local recreational activities for residents to engage in. The calendars can be picked up at Town facilities and are available at www.haltonhills.ca.

For information, contact Frank Prospero, Community Development Supervisor for the Town, at 905-873-2601 ext.2262 or frankp@haltonhills.ca.

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