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TIP SHEET #10



How to Develop a Policy for Your Local Rodeo

Lasting change may be achieved through the enactment and enforcement of written policies.

1. Policy Options¹

A no-tobacco sponsorship policy may prohibit:

- Accepting money for a purse, point fund, or scholarship program.
- Distributing or selling tobacco products in an “Adult-only Facility” or sampling booth.
- Posting signage that promotes a tobacco company, including a scoreboard, 8-second counter, banners, billboards, or chute signs (on the gate that releases the cowboy and animal into the arena).
- Allowing tobacco company flags to be carried during the rodeo.
- Sale or distribution of rodeo programs that include tobacco advertising (note that if the program is provided by another party, this component of tobacco sponsorship might be beyond the control of local rodeo organizers, especially if they cannot afford to print their own programs).
- Announcing over the PA system a tobacco name to describe livestock, such as “Smokeless Unforgiven” (note that although local organizers cannot control the names of stock animals, they can demand that their stock contractors not send animals with tobacco names to their event).

Some rodeos may not be ready to drop their tobacco sponsorship, but may be amenable to other, more incremental changes. Once these changes are in place, the rodeo organizers can be approached again later regarding tobacco sponsorship.

- Smoke-Free Grounds or Tobacco-Free Grounds Policy – prohibits smoking or tobacco use anywhere on the rodeo grounds.
- Designated Smoking/Tobacco Use Areas Policy – permits smoking/tobacco use only in specified areas of the rodeo grounds.

2. Develop a list of existing local tobacco-free policies.

Identify rodeos that have a written policy that prohibits tobacco sponsorship. To start this process, contact your local health department or tobacco control coalition.² Examples include the Poway Rodeo, which signed a no-sponsorship agreement with the American Lung Association of San Diego and Imperial Counties in 2004,³ and South Dakota State University’s rodeo club that became tobacco-free starting with its 50th Annual Jackrabbit Stampede rodeo in April 2004.⁴

Identify rodeos that have not signed a written policy but that do not accept tobacco sponsorship. Talking with the advocates or even the rodeo organizers in these communities can give you insight into why some rodeos will not sign policies. This can help you anticipate similar arguments in your own community and develop strategies for overcoming this barrier. One example is the California Rodeo Salinas, one of the largest PRCA rodeos in the country. They have not accepted tobacco sponsorship funding since 1996, but they do not have a written policy to that effect.⁵

3. Don’t overlook your local non-rodeo County fair as a policy advocacy information resource.

Many non-rodeo events have signed policies prohibiting tobacco-industry sponsorship at their venues. For example, the California State Fair board prohibits the annual state fair/CalExpo, a highly attended event, from

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displaying tobacco product advertisements and accepting sponsorship money from any tobacco-related company. They also created a plan for a smoke-free event, with a few designated smoking areas throughout the fairgrounds.⁶ Many other California fair boards have signed similar written policies.⁷

4. Develop relationships and work with key allies.

Work with rodeo insiders. Rodeo insiders such as cowboys/cowgirls, rodeo queens, and rodeo officials can help you garner advocacy support and influence policy makers. For example, in May 2004, the Families Against Chewing Tobacco Sampling (FACTS) project in Santa Maria, California obtained support from the Hart Bar Bucking Stock Company, a supplier of rodeo stock animals. They signed a policy stating they would not accept tobacco company sponsorship, and would not name their livestock after a tobacco brand.⁸ It is hoped that their actions will influence other rodeo stock companies.

5. Work with cowboy-oriented bars and local businesses.

Many rodeo events and businesses promote annual rodeos with posters, banners, and special events. Cowboy-oriented bars often accept tobacco sponsorship for bar-night events. The FACTS Project convinced the owners of the Maverick II cowboy bar—which is located near a large tobacco-sponsored annual rodeo event in Santa Maria, California—to sign a policy prohibiting tobacco sponsorship of events on its premises.⁹ Publicizing this kind of support can put pressure on other businesses and policy makers.

6. Get the policy *in writing*.

Rodeo organizers may say that they have a verbal policy to prohibit tobacco sponsorship and don't need a written policy. This may be a good step, but a verbal policy may not be as likely to withstand the change in membership and staff across time, and the organizers may be more likely to feel bound by something they signed. In addition, a written policy can be used as a model for other rodeos.

¹ For more information, see *Model Policies for Rodeos: Requiring Smoke-Free/Tobacco-Free Grounds or Areas* on the Technical Assistance Legal Center (TALC) website. <http://talc.phi.org>.

² See the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO) website at <http://www.astho.org> for a list of state health departments.

³ See the San Diego County project page on the Buck Tobacco website at http://www.bucktobacco.org/projects/sd/sd_page.html for detailed information about Poway's policy.

⁴ For more information, see the South Dakota State University website at <http://www3.sdstate.edu/CooperativeExtension/NewsDetail51157.cfm?Id=46,3658>.

⁵ See the Monterey County page on the Buck Tobacco website at http://www.bucktobacco.org/projects/mont/mont_page.html for more information.

⁶ Perales, D.P. and Perales, D.C. *California State Fair Case Study* prepared for the Gold Country Region, and submitted to the California Department of Health Services, Tobacco Control Section, December 2001.

⁷ See "Toolbox 2: Organizations that have joined the tobacco-free herd" section in the Rodeo Toolkit. Copies of the *Rodeo Toolkit* may be obtained by contacting the Tobacco Education Clearinghouse of California (TECC) at (800) 258-9090.

⁸ See the Santa Barbara County page on the Buck Tobacco website at http://www.bucktobacco.org/projects/sb/sb_030520.html for more information.

⁹ Ibid.