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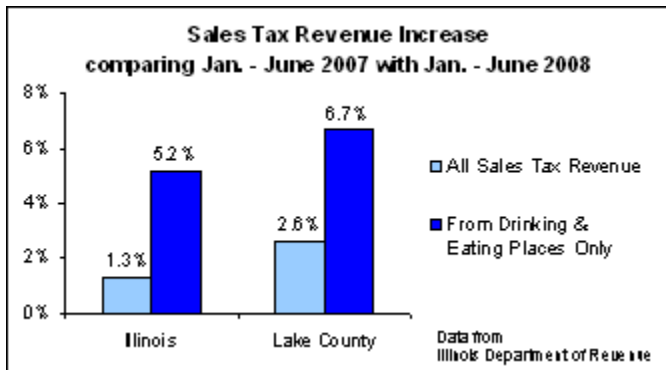
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December 26, 2008

Clearing The Air on Smoking Ban

When the state banned smoking in public a year ago, Lois Sorenson wasn't sure what to expect. Her family had operated McCormick's in Lake Bluff for over 50 years, and for over 50 years it had been a haven for smokers. The smoke never bothered Mrs. Sorenson, even though she quit smoking 43 years ago. The odor was so dense that it lingered in the bar's curtains for months after the ban took effect last January. Carefully in those first days, Mrs. Sorenson informed a group of regulars they would have to take their cigarettes outdoors now and forever after. "And you know, not one of them complained," she told GazeboNews. "They just picked up their cigarettes and went outside to smoke. Later my son-in-law built a tarp to protect them from the wind, because they go out to smoke even when it's zero degrees."



The Lake County Health Department reports that contrary to what everyone expected last year, the statewide no-smoking law may have had a healthy effect on businesses.

The health department points to data from the Illinois Department of Revenue, which shows a 2.6% increase in Lake County overall sales tax revenue and a 6.7% increase in tax revenue from restaurants and bars.

And while some were certain the Smoke-Free Illinois legislation would stomp out new enterprises from opening, that does not

appear to have played out. The number of liquor licenses in Illinois remained constant since the ban started. "The effect of the smoking ban on renewals is negligible if any," said Ted Penesis, Industry Education Manager at the Illinois Liquor Control Commission, in a press release. He added that he was surprised the difference was not larger due to the economy.

As for McCormick's, Mrs. Sorenson said the ban does not seem to have helped smokers kick the habit--they just go outside. Nor has it effected her business one way or the other. "The guy now comes every three months to clean the air filter," she said, motioning to a large contraption hanging on the wall in the bar. "He used to come every month, so I suppose you could say it's not helped his business much."

Posted at 10:06 PM | [Permalink](#)

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Probably over half of the small bars in my area of Chicago ignore the ban.

Posted by: Bob | [December 27, 2008 at 05:13 AM](#)

BRAVO! Now the rest of us & those who became wise & quit smoking years ago, don't have to put up with the stinky mess and the health hazard! If smokers hover 'round the door of a business I won't go in. There are places without a smoking brigade at the door! A C G

Posted by: abigail G Fassnacht | [December 27, 2008 at 07:58 AM](#)

We never used to go to McCormick's and James' Tavern because of the smoke. Now, we're able to frequent these wonderfully quant places in Lake Bluff. James' DOES have the best burgers and McCormick's breakfast (Corned Beef Hash is unbelievable)can't be beat!

Posted by: MB | [December 27, 2008 at 08:44 AM](#)

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