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Smoke ban boosts, burns businesses

1 YEAR OLD | Helps bars, restaurants, but casinos lose

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December 30, 2008

BY MONIFA THOMAS

Before the state smoking ban went into effect last Jan. 1, many bar and restaurant owners feared that the new law would have a disastrous impact on business.

But revenue figures for 2008 show that sales tax receipts for bars, nightclubs and restaurants increased in the six months after Illinois went smoke-free. Illinois casinos, on the other hand, have seen a double-digit drop in gaming receipts this year.

"At the very least, I think it's safe to say that [the ban] hasn't hurt business," said Barbara De Nekker, a community health specialist with Tobacco Free Lake County.

Anecdotal evidence from Chicago area restaurants and bars shows a mixed bag.

Going smoke-free has done wonders for Mickey Finn's Brewery in Libertyville, owner Brian Grano said. Grano estimates business is up 7 percent this year.

"We're getting new people that love to go to bars, but because of asthma wouldn't. And even people who were smokers loved it. They said, 'I smoke, but I don't necessarily like to smell smoke,' " he said. "I can very definitively say that the smoking ban helped us."

Nick Demos, head chef for the Blue Angel diner in Jefferson Park, has seen the opposite effect. He said the 24-hour diner is hurting, since prior to the ban, most customers who came in after 10 p.m. were smokers.

"In the summertime, it's much easier, because they can go outside and smoke. But during the winter, it hurts," Demos said.

Illinois casinos have been in a particularly bad state.

Tom Swoik, executive director of the Illinois Casino Gaming Association, said gambling receipts in Illinois are falling faster than in neighboring states.

"The only difference between us and them is the smoking ban," Swoik said.


[Smoking ban is bad for business, say casinos](#)

From PolicyBlog

[UP IN SMOKE...](#)

From Tangled Blog

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POWERED BY  BlogBurst The views expressed in these blog posts are those of the author and not of the Chicago Sun-Times.

READER COMMENTS:

helper1 wrote:

God bless the smoking ban! Smokers can commit slow motion suicide if they want to, but don't let them take anyone along in the process by forcing others to involuntarily inhale poisonous tobacco smoke. No sympathy for smokers who joyfully are killing themselves while contemptuously ignoring the health and rights of non-smokers. May all smokers enjoy their foul, filthy and disgusting habit in the privacy of their own homes while saving the lives of innocent by-standers.

12/30/2008 8:20 AM CST on suntimes.com

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ssidebob wrote:

Why is the economy so different across the state line?

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ssidebob wrote:

Kudos to Bowling Green, Kentucky These people have the ULTIMATE solution. Ban the ban lobbyists. We're all rooting for them, Keep up the lobbyist bans."And at a meeting last June that turned contentious, the board of the 10-county Lake Cumberland District Health Department voted down a resolution in support of initiatives to eliminate smoking in public places in the area." "Then the board approved a motion limiting the ability of smoke-free advocates to bring up the measure again." "It'll come back and come back and come back," said Kevin DeFebbo, city manager in Bowling Green. "The anti-smokers firmly believe their position." Excerpts from this article www.kentucky.com/181/story/638425.html

12/30/2008 8:14 AM CST on suntimes.com

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carumba wrote:

Don't let the casinos kid you. They are still making huge profits, smoking or not. All casinos have experienced a drop in revenue due to the economy. These casino owners just can't get enough of suckers money.

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ssidebob wrote:

There are at least eight (maybe more) small bars within 2 miles of my house that keep their customers by ignoring the ban. There have been NO customer, worker, or neighbors complaints. The only complaints have been from neighbors of bars that comply. That's why their business has had no decline.

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kersey wrote:

When are people going to stop lying? Last time I read an article like this they said business was down but it wasn't do to the smoking ban it was the economy, now they say the tax receipts increased, they are full of it, if they the liars and the media for printing this lying garbage want to meet me in my community and I will take them to the businesses that were hurt by the smoking ban and later by the economy, and Ms DeNekker

you should be ashamed for making a bias and untruthful statement like that and the media for reporting it, and by the way tell that to all that closed their doors, I'm a non-smoker but at least I have some common-sense that many people in this country don't have anymore.

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inside wrote:

What a fluff piece for the anti-smoking crowd. Do the up revenues include McDonalds drive thrus? Will the crushingly low figure of the last 2 quarters of the year be "proof" that smoking hasn't effected restaurants and bars? Still 20% of adults smoke...what do you think the percentage is of bar restaurant patrons? The smoking ban people sound so much like the tobacco execs....willing to feed us any lie to protect their position. Your Taliban like rules to enforce your version of morality....it goes way beyond health when beaches and parks are "non smoking"....won. At least have the decency to admit the cost. Lower casino revenues...less tax receipts at bars and restaurants and the job losses associated with that. One Cancer Society spokesperson even suggested that lost casino revenues were the result of "better promotions" from Indiana casinos. When you claim to be on the side of Allah or enviornment or progressive health as a rationale to take away individual choice, at least don't lie about the cost. The new Taliban have arrived. Will the Committe on Virtue and Vice target butter next? Want to justify these intrusions by "saving lives"? Take the highway speeds down to 35 MPH...save 35,000 lives a year...reduce poisonous emmissions . Oh but that might intrude on your personal right to go anywhere, anytime. Behavior shaping laws depend on whose ox is getting gored. I look forward to their continuing insightful mandates on how I should lead my life.

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delilah wrote:

I smoke. I dont mind the ban from restaurants, but you wont catch me in a bar, I can drink at home if I want, I quit bowling, because I couldnt smoke. At work, I go outside, cold or not. I dont think its the governments right to ban smoking. I can tell you though, they have lost my business and my revenues.

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dlw wrote:

I don't smoke and I really don't care if a business is smoke-free or not. I do care that business owners don't make the decision to be smoke-free, but those in Springfield make up their mind for them. If business is better because you are smoke-free or you just like it more - great. It's the OWNERS decision to make, though. I was at a bowling alley earlier in the year and the owner was outside sweeping up cigarette butts. He said that people would just litter outside or smoke in the bathrooms. He HATED the law. Soon red meat will be outlawed....

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daniel1000 wrote:

It's rather ironic they banned smoking in bars (alcohol kills a LOT of people every year) and casino's (no, addiction to gambling is not a problem). I can see it in restaurants or other places like stadiums etc, but banning in other places that exist purely because of other addictions (alcohol and gambling) is ridiculous. Pretty hypocritical. Bars and casino's exist for one reason. An outlet for other types of addiction.

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