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MEDIA RELEASE

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ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER ROUND! WILL PIERCE COUNTY BUSINESSES BE SELLING TOBACCO TO MINORS?

In 2014 Pierce County youth are once again making the rounds by attempting to purchase cigarettes for a good cause. That's the idea behind WI WINS, a program designed to give recognition to businesses that deny youth access to tobacco. To help this effort even more, local law enforcement agencies have joined this mission to support the WI WINS teams in Pierce County.

Each year Pierce County WI WINS teams consisting of an adult supervisor and local youth conduct compliance checks at area businesses. They record whether or not the underage youth are able to purchase tobacco products from the retailers. This information is then sent to the State of Wisconsin and updated on the WI WINS website, <http://www.wisconsinwins.com/>, which can be used to see how Pierce County underage sales compare with other counties. Thus far this year there have been 19 checks completed throughout the county and FOUR sales have been made most without even checking IDs. Congratulations to the local retailers, who have made a commitment to keeping our youth smoke free and refusing tobacco sales to minors, but there is still a need for more education. The teams will be completing more checks throughout the county before the end of the year. Local retailers can get education on how to check ID's on <http://www.smokecheck.org> or call the health department.

Every year more and more counties in Wisconsin are participating in the WI WINS effort. Perhaps this is because they know that 5.3 million packs of cigarettes are sold illegally to teens in Wisconsin each year (www.fightwithfact.com) and they want to do their part to put a stop to it. One of the main goals of WI WINS is to push the compliance rate higher each year and WI WINS teams are going to work harder than ever to get the compliance rate as low as possible in 2014!

Tobacco retailers along with parents and the greater community must do their part to keep tobacco products out of the hands of kids. Every time the compliance rate goes up, Wisconsin wins (WI WINS)!

END

Our mission is to assure the health of the public, prevent disease and injury, promote health behaviors, and protect against environmental hazards.