

# **Delaware General Health District**

## ***Dedicated to your health***

# NEWS RELEASE

## **TOBACCO FREE COALITION MEMBERS TO LAUNCH 'STORE ALERT II'**

P.O. Box 570            1-3 W. Winter St.      Delaware OH 43015  
740-368-1700          FAX 740-368-1736      Web Site: [www.delawarehealth.org](http://www.delawarehealth.org)

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

For further information contact Jesse Carter, public information officer, at 740-203-2085.

**DELAWARE, Oh., March 26, 2010** – Volunteers from the Tobacco-Free Delaware County Coalition are returning to about 40 local stores and drive-throughs to check on tobacco displays and advertising.

They are looking for flavored cigarettes, which were banned under the federal Family Smoking Prevention and Tobacco Control Act adopted last year. They also will check for changes in tobacco advertising patterns possibly spurred by the same new law.

The visits are part of a nationwide program called Store ALERT (Advocates Limiting Exposure to Retail Tobacco). The program is part of the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids.

The Store Alert grading system assesses the likelihood that children might be enticed to use tobacco by displays of tobacco products and advertising. The goal is to reduce the number of children getting hooked on tobacco by reducing tobacco's influence. As the Store ALERT web site states, "Major cigarette companies spend about \$9.5 billion a year to market their products in local stores. Their ads clutter our stores and turn them into tools of the tobacco industry ... and people get hooked."

The Store Alert report cards completed at 41 Delaware County businesses in 2009 showed that the tobacco advertising was somewhat restrained, and could have been a lot worse. About a third of the businesses got A grades. Six flunked. The rest got Bs, Cs or Ds.

The Health District's tobacco program shared the results of last year's Store Alert surveys with community leaders and business owners, and will do so again after this year's

survey is complete. Any violations of the new federal law regarding flavored cigarettes discovered during the survey will be reported to appropriate authorities.

“Tobacco use causes premature illness and death. That is what really should be advertised about it,” said Linda Diamond of the Delaware General Health District Assessment, Prevention and Education Division.

According to the Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids:

- Children are more sensitive to tobacco advertising than adults, and are better able to recall tobacco advertising than adults.
- More than 80 percent of underage smokers use three of the most heavily advertised brands of cigarettes.
- 80 percent of teen-agers visit a convenience store at least once a week.

For more information about Store ALERT or the Tobacco-Free Delaware County Coalition, contact Kelsey Kuhlman at 740-368-1700.