



# ***NEWS RELEASE***

## **St. Charles County Government**

**Department of Community Health and the Environment**

*Gil Copley, Director*

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Hollie Milam, Health Educator  
Cameron Satterfield, Public Information Officer

(636) 949-7400  
(636) 949-7408

### **Survey Shows Concern about Tobacco Use and Secondhand Smoke**

***St. Charles County, Missouri*** – An online survey by the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment on tobacco use and awareness finds many people avoid restaurants that allow smoking. In addition, more than half of current smokers are concerned about their tobacco use and many are considering breaking the habit.

Nearly 800 people have responded to the department's survey so far. Of those, 20 percent currently smoke, and 61 percent of those people were concerned about their tobacco use. In addition, 56 percent of smokers indicated they were seriously considering stopping smoking within the next six months.

Secondhand smoke in restaurants and other public places has received increased scrutiny in recent years. In Missouri, Kansas City and Columbia have passed smoking bans. Of those taking the survey, 54 percent said they strongly agreed with the statement, "I am more likely to go to a restaurant that is smoke-free."

Hollie Milam, a health educator for St. Charles County and author of the survey, says the results compiled so far are encouraging. "Two-thirds of the people we heard from believe secondhand smoke is a serious problem in our community. Clearly, citizens are concerned about the health effects of tobacco and secondhand smoke. Some choose to demonstrate this concern by patronizing smoke-free restaurants."

The St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment partnered with the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services Maternal Child Health Program to assess tobacco use and awareness in the community. Citizens are invited to take part in this continuing survey. Visit [www.scchealth.org](http://www.scchealth.org) and click on the "Tobacco Use and Awareness Survey" button on the main page. The data collected will help the department address tobacco use and develop targeted interventions that meet community need. The survey will also help inform community groups regarding public opinion on smoke-free workplace protection.

For more information about the St. Charles County Department of Community Health and the Environment, call (636) 949-7400 or visit [www.scchealth.org](http://www.scchealth.org).

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