

Local retailers black out tobacco ads

Last week, 16 tobacco retailers in Jackson, Cottonwood and Redwood counties joined "Start Noticing," a local youth group, in an effort to raise awareness of tobacco marketing strategies in the community by blacking out all tobacco advertisements in their stores.

The act coincided with the Great American Smokeout, a day-long event sponsored by the American Cancer Society, which encourages all smokers to quit smoking for one day.

Start Noticing has been working since 2007 with youth, parents, local community leaders and retailers to educate people to start noticing tobacco advertising and its effect on youth in an effort to eliminate the tobacco companies' strategy of using in-store advertising to influence youth tobacco use. The coalition is supported by business owners, community organizations and schools.

To build on the Great American Smokeout event this year, Start Noticing asked retailers to cover all tobacco advertisements in their stores to reduce the influence of tobacco advertising on youth for the day.

"While it may seem harmless, research has demonstrated that in-store tobacco advertising is particularly effective in influencing youth tobacco usage," said Susan Vileta, program coordinator for CJR-Start Noticing at Cottonwood Jackson Community Health Services. "By covering all advertisements for one day, we believe members of this community will start noticing the efforts taken by tobacco companies to reach current and potential smokers."

The following Jackson



Photo by Mike Jordan

Hage Oil participated in the Great American Smokeout event last Thursday, Nov. 19 and cooperated with Start Noticing in blacking out these tobacco ads, one held by Hage Oil Deli Manager Heather Johnson and one just above her head to the right.

County stores signed on to participate in the ad black-out in partnership with Start Noticing: The ExpressWay and Jackson Municipal Liquor in Jackson, Hage Oil in Lakefield, Okabena Municipal Liquor in Okabena and P.J.'s in Heron Lake.

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