



Appleton
Fox Cities
Wisconsin

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Tavern League summit back in Appleton after boycott threat

Smoke ban angst set aside to honor members' efforts

By Ben Jones

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APPLETON — Three years after the state Tavern League said it would no longer hold conventions in cities with smoking bans, the organization is back in Appleton.

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The Tavern League of Wisconsin's spring conference, which concludes today, has drawn about 650 people to the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel on College Avenue. The venue is near the center of a city that bans smoking in taverns.

"We decided in retrospect we would honor the efforts of the Outagamie County Tavern League and we would not punish them. Therefore, we are back in Appleton," Pete Madland, the league's executive director, said Wednesday.

For years, the league has been a lead opponent of smoking bans.

On July 1, 2005, a smoking ban took effect in Appleton that applies to taverns — including College Avenue establishments that are haunts of conference attendees.

On Oct. 3, 2005, the league's board voted 36-0 to ban conventions in cities with smoking bans. So until this week, the action effectively put an end to league conventions in Appleton.

Though the league has reversed its policy, Madland said the smoking ban is still a big issue for its members because of the economic damage they say bans can cause tavern owners.

"It's huge," he said.

Gov. Jim Doyle's proposed two-year state budget includes language that would enact a statewide smoking ban. It would need to pass the Legislature to become law.

Jackie McBride, a Waukesha tavern owner, said she heard some league owners were boycotting the conference because of its location, a stance she opposes.

"It's not (the bars) in Appleton's fault," she said.

Additional Facts

Smoking bans in Wisconsin

Cities and counties that ban smoking in public and private businesses:

- Appleton
- Dane County (applies only to towns because the county doesn't have authority over cities' and villages' municipal ordinances)

- Eau Claire
- Fitchburg (Madison suburb) has a partial ban but will go smoke free in 2011
- Fond du Lac
- Madison
- Marshfield
- Middleton (Madison suburb), goes into effect March 15
- Monona (Madison suburb), goes into effect in June
- Shorewood (Milwaukee suburb)
- Shorewood Hills (Madison suburb)
- Weston (Wausau suburb), goes into effect Jan. 1
- 25 other municipalities or counties have partial bans.

Sources: League of Wisconsin Municipalities, SmokeFree Wisconsin
