



Appleton  
Fox Cities  
Wisconsin

May 11, 2009

## Two Menasha eateries get a jump on possible statewide smoking ban

By Andy Thompson

Post-Crescent Community News Editor

MENASHA — Restaurant owners Moe and Joanne Jaber sensed it was only a matter of time until a statewide smoking ban was imposed in Wisconsin.

But they weren't willing to wait for the Legislature to act before prohibiting customers from lighting up at Luigi's, an eatery at 332 Ahnaip St. that features Italian food. The restaurant went smoke-free on April 28.

◆ <http://www.postcrescent.com/ic/textalerts.shtml> target="new">Click here to sign up for news, weather and sports text alerts.

Wisconsin lawmakers are poised to pass on Wednesday a statewide ban on smoking in virtually any workplace, including bars and restaurants, effective July 2010.

Twenty-five other states already have gone smoke-free.

The Jabers concluded that that going smoke-free now was in their best interests.

They also made their move in the absence of a smoking ban in Menasha, taking the view that smoking was unhealthy.

"We have a lot of families that come in here with their kids," said Moe Jaber. "We don't like taking our kids to restaurants with smoking."

Luigi's is among a number of restaurants in the Fox Cities that have gone smoke-free in recent months, even though they are not under pressure to do so.

"It's a family environment and people bring their kids. I don't want my kids around it, and I see why others don't as well," said Joanne Jaber.

She said "maybe 1 percent" of the restaurant's customers are smokers.

Another Menasha restaurant, Nauts Landing, 124 Main St., prohibited smoking as of March 1. Owner Renee Brey is pleased with the results.

"It has really been good," she said. "There are lots of positive comments coming in."

Brey said business is up by 15 percent since Nauts Landing went smoke-free and "some people who haven't been here for five to 10 years are coming back."

"It was a little bit shocking to find out that some people weren't coming for that reason," she said.

Brey was an outspoken critic of Neenah's restaurant smoking ban, which took effect in October 2001. But she pointed out that she was opposed to government mandating the ban instead of letting

individual eateries make the call.

Going smoke free is "not as controversial now," Brey said. "It's almost expected."

Brey said smokers can go outside and light up when they patronize Nauts. In the summer, they can smoke on the outdoor dining deck.

Sue Nett, director of the Menasha Health Department, praised Nauts Landing and Luigi's for prohibiting smoking.

"In a time where it is not state-mandated, there are local businesses that are looking at the patrons they serve and coming to a decision that is best for their patrons. Health-wise, it is in the best interests of customers," Nett said.

Maureen Busalacchi, executive director of SmokeFree Wisconsin, said she is pleased to hear that the restaurants in Menasha went smoke-free without a requirement to do so.

Still, she said she prefers a statewide smoking ban.

## Additional Facts

