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New Poll Shows Overwhelming Support for Eau Claire Smoke-free Ordinance *Support strongest among those who go out to eat or drink most often*

Eau Claire, March 9, 2009—A new poll released today shows strong support for Eau Claire’s comprehensive smoke-free ordinance. The poll found an overwhelming 74% of Eau Claire city voters favor the law, which applies to all workplaces, including bars and restaurants, in the city.

The poll, conducted by the nationally recognized polling firm The Mellman Group, also found support for the ordinance is strongest among those who go out to bars and restaurants the most. Fully 77% of people who go out at least once a week support the ordinance.

“This is strong evidence the vast majority of people in Eau Claire, and especially the ones who patronize area bars and restaurants most frequently, prefer smoke-free air,” said Katie Wilson, member of the Tobacco Free Partnership of Eau Claire County.

According to the poll, 7 in 10 voters think the law has worked well and want it to stay in place and more than half say they’re *more* likely to go out to eat or drink because of the ordinance compared with only 8% who say they’ll go out less.

Moreover, fully 82% of voters surveyed say they believe secondhand smoke is a health hazard.

“It makes sense,” explains Wilson. “Most people don’t smoke and most people understand that secondhand smoke is serious health hazard. No wonder they’re more likely to go out and enjoy themselves now that the city is smoke-free. Everyone benefits— patrons, workers and business owners –when everyone is smoke-free.”

In addition, support for Eau Claire’s smoke-free ordinance is broad and bipartisan. The poll found more than 70% of Democrats, Republicans and Independents all in favor of the law. Similar support was found among men and women and among those living in all parts of the city.

“Eau Claire is among a growing number of communities and entire counties in Wisconsin passing comprehensive smoke-free ordinances,” added Wilson. “The popularity of Eau Claire’s ordinance is just one more reason for other communities and the state to pass a smoke-free law. Everyone deserves the right to smoke-free air at work.”

The poll included a random citywide sample of 400 likely voters and was conducted from February 23-25. The poll, which was commissioned and paid for by SmokeFree Wisconsin, has a margin of error of +/- 4.9 percentage points.

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Available for interviews:

Nathan Henry
Vice President, The Mellman Group

Aaron Doeppers
Regional Director, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids