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For immediate release: June 10, 2008

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****Voters Clear the Air ****

Smokefree advocates in Fargo, celebrated a huge victory for health on Tuesday when voters showed the time was now to protect all workers from secondhand smoke. Volunteers were thrilled that Fargo city voters showed such strong support, by 61 to 39 percent for Measure 2, a ballot initiative requiring that workplaces, including bars and truck stops be smokefree beginning July 1.

Dr. Byrum Cartwright, chairman of the SAFE Coalition said, "Once again, Fargo is showing strong leadership on this important issue, proving to the rest of the communities in North Dakota that protecting workers from the harms of secondhand smoke is absolutely the right thing to do."

During the last several weeks, volunteers gave educational presentations, distributed brochures, called voters, and participated in various grassroots activities. They were encouraged by the outpouring of positive support from Fargo citizens. The Fargo voters rejected a confusing campaign against the ballot initiative that was funded almost entirely by local bar owners.

West Fargo voters also showed strong support by passing their smoking ordinance advisory vote which will conform to Fargo's smokefree law. We urge West Fargo's commissioners to follow the wishes of the voters and take the necessary steps to protect all workers from secondhand smoke.

The communities have spoken by voting to protect their hearts, lungs and the health of their citizens. The measure's supporters hope that the rest of North Dakota can soon enjoy the same protections. Secondhand smoke contains 4,000 chemicals, including at least 60 known to cause cancer. It is also a cause of heart disease, bronchitis and other illnesses.