

Live Smoke Free

The Smoke-Free Multi-Housing program
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New Year, New Ways to Find Smoke-Free Apartments

New online directory of Minnesota's smoke-free apartment buildings launched for 2009

ST. PAUL, MINN. -- Minnesota renters looking for smoke-free apartment buildings can easily find them by using a new online directory launched this month by the Association for Nonsmokers—Minnesota (ANSR). Compiled by ANSR's Live Smoke Free program, the online directory, www.mnsmokefreehousing.org, lists more than 250 Minnesota apartment buildings that are 100 percent smoke free. The new user-friendly directory provides renters with a free, easy way to search for apartment buildings in their community that do not allow smoking inside the building, including the individual apartment units.

“Tenants are looking for smoke-free apartments, and apartment building owners want to promote their smoke-free buildings. Secondhand smoke migrating into apartments is a common problem, and renters are unable to protect themselves and their families from the harmful toxins in secondhand smoke,” said Brittany McFadden, Director of Live Smoke Free. “The only way to avoid exposure is to live in a smoke-free apartment building.”

Live Smoke Free's online directory provides a free advertising opportunity for apartment building owners with buildings that are completely smoke free. The Live Smoke Free web site also includes a model lease addendum for smoke-free buildings and information for building owners interested in adopting a smoke-free policy. Resources for renters dealing with secondhand smoke are also available.

Owners with smoke-free apartment buildings are overwhelmingly positive about their policy. “It has been hugely successful for us, no matter how we measure it. From a property marketing standpoint, we would get calls on a regular basis from renters who wanted smoke-free homes. We are thrilled to be able to provide that for them,” said Laurel Zacher, Marketing Manager for Bigos Management, which currently has three smoke-free buildings. “We are also concerned about our current residents' health and happiness. We just wanted to eliminate the threat and nuisance of secondhand smoke that can easily drift from one residence to another.”

Renters seeking affordable and subsidized housing can also enjoy the benefits of smoke-free living. Minnesota has the second highest number of public housing authorities with smoke-free policies in the country. There are 19 public housing authorities that have adopted a smoke-free policy for at least one of their buildings. The Dakota County Community Development Agency (CDA) currently has two smoke-free buildings, and is planning for more. Kurt Keena, the Director of Property Management, has coordinated the CDA's implementation of smoke-free policies. “The CDA felt it was important to offer a completely smoke-free housing option within our senior housing program. Doing so has allowed us to offer our residents an

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expanded range of choices in housing at affordable rents. The response has been quite positive, and we plan on expanding the option with future new developments,” he said.

Smoke-free apartment buildings are becoming the norm across the country. Thousands of buildings throughout the United States are smoke free, including Guardian Management communities, which adopted a smoke-free policy for all 130 of its apartment communities in seven states—the single largest smoke-free policy at rental properties in U.S. history.

For information on finding or listing a smoke-free apartment building, please contact Live Smoke Free at (651) 646-3005 or info@mnsmokefreehousing.org.

About Live Smoke Free

Live Smoke Free, a program of the Association for Nonsmokers-Minnesota (ANSR), promotes smoke-free policies for apartment buildings in the Twin Cities metro area. Currently, Minnesota tenants seeking smoke-free multi-unit housing largely outnumber the amount of smoke-free units available. Live Smoke Free educates building owners, managers, tenants, and housing industry professionals about the benefits of smoke-free buildings. Live Smoke Free assists building owners and managers with creating and promoting a smoke-free policy for their property. The program also assists tenants in finding solutions to secondhand smoke problems. Tenants can learn how to talk to their landlord about creating a smoke-free policy for their building. For more information, go to: www.mnsmokefreehousing.org

About Minnesota renter demand for smoke-free housing

According to a 2001 survey by the Center for Energy and Environment, almost half of the state’s renters stated secondhand smoke comes into their apartment unit from a location outside their apartment unit. Of those with problems, more than one-third of the respondents indicated the smoke bothers them “a lot” or “so much I’m thinking of moving”. The research also shows demand is strong for apartment units that do not smell of other people’s smoke: more than fifty percent of those living in rental apartment units would be “very likely” to choose a smoke-free apartment, all other things being equal. Close to 20 percent of smokers indicated they would like a smoke-free unit as well. For a complete report of the survey findings, go to: http://www.mncee.org/research/environmental_tobacco/multifamily_bldgs/index.php

About secondhand smoke

Secondhand smoke is a cause of lung cancer and heart disease in nonsmokers. In June 2006, the U.S. Surgeon General concluded that the scientific evidence indicates there is no risk-free level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Exposure to secondhand smoke causes asthma in children and can trigger asthma attacks in both adults and children. According to the 2008 Minnesota Youth Tobacco and Asthma Survey, nearly half of students with asthma reported being exposed to secondhand smoke in the past seven days. For more information, go to: <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/secondhandsmoke/index.html>

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