

Knowles orders smoking ban in municipality's buildings

The Municipality of Anchorage, led by Mayor Totty Knowles, began enforcing an ordinance to ban smoking in all municipal buildings Jan. 1.

Prior to Surgeon General C. Everett Koop's published report that cigarette smoke can cause lung cancer and other illnesses in non-smokers, Knowles introduced Ordinance AO 86-186 to the Anchorage Assembly to ban smoking in all municipality-owned buildings, except the Egan Civic and Convention Center and the Sullivan Sports Arena. After taking public comment from municipal employees and the general public, the assembly passed the ordinance on an 8-3 vote.

This will affect about 4,000 municipal employees and 162 buildings which are either owned or leased by the Municipality of Anchorage.

The Anchorage School District and its buildings will not have to go smokeless until July 1. This will allow teachers and staff adequate time to "kick the habit" before the start of next school year.

This smoking ban is believed to be the most progressive in the country and will solve health ills and problems and reduce building maintenance and ventilation costs related to smoking.

The Municipality of Anchorage has made smoking cessation classes available to all interested municipal employees. The municipality will reimburse 50 percent of the tuition costs upon completion of the class.

Knowles said Surgeon General Koop's goal of a smoke-free society by the year 2000 is one goal which the Municipality of Anchorage can take the lead in for the good of the nation.