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Anti-smoking petition drive announced
By The Associated Press

OMAHA— A new workplace anti-smoking petition drive in Omaha would provide a two-year exception for stand-alone bars that offer limited food service.

That would give them and their customers time to prepare for cleaner indoor air.

The ban would not extend to outdoor beer gardens or entrances.

Assuming the ban makes the November ballot and is approved, it would begin on Jan. 2 next year and affect all indoor workplaces, including restaurants.

Exceptions would include hotels, nursing homes and businesses in private residences. Smoking would be banned in licensed home day cares.

Business owners and people caught smoking in the businesses would face a \$100 fine for a first offense, \$200 for the second and \$500 for the third and all thereafter.

The people behind the petition drive are Mark Welsch and Mike Salkin, who lead the Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution, and Dr. Reed Peters.

For the petition to make the ballot, signatures from about 9,300 registered voters must be submitted by mid-July.

The petition says that if enough signatures are gathered, the City Council, in accordance with the city charter, will vote on the ban.

If it fails there, then the measure goes on the November ballot.

The council approved a ban last year that would have applied to restaurants but not keno parlors and bars where food wasn't prepared. Mayor Mike Fahey vetoed the proposal, holding out for a full ban or no ban.

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