

Published Wednesday
May 3, 2006

Smoking-ban petition drive begins today

Supporters of an initiative petition that would ban smoking at indoor workplaces will begin circulating the petitions today.

A press conference is set for 10:15 a.m. at the W. Clarke Swanson Library at 90th Street and West Dodge Road to kick off the petition drive.

Organizers must collect at least 9,325 valid signatures to put the petition on the November ballot.

If passed, the ordinance would go into effect Jan. 2, 2007.

The ban would allow exceptions for a few kinds of businesses, including hotels, nursing homes and enterprises in private residences, but would exempt for two years stand-alone bars that offer only limited food service and do not admit people younger than 18.

Those behind the petition drive are Mark Welsch and Mike Salkin, leaders of the Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution, and Dr. Reed Peters.

Some bar and restaurant owners have argued that people should be allowed to use a legal product in the establishments. Owners also have said that a ban would drive customers outside city limits, hurting businesses and reducing tax revenue.

###