



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chatham County Commissioners Adopt Tobacco-free Ordinance

PITTSBORO, NC— On December 16, 2019, the Chatham County Board of Commissioners adopted a tobacco-free county ordinance, based on a recommendation from the Chatham County Board of Health. The ordinance, which will take effect January 2, 2020, is based on the current administrative tobacco-free county policy implemented in 2016.

The ordinance prohibits the use of any tobacco products including cigarettes, cigars, all forms of smokeless tobacco (dip or chew) and other smoking devices such as vapor products (electronic cigarettes or e-cigarettes) on Chatham County grounds. The ordinance covers any property that is owned, leased or maintained by the County such as vehicles, buildings and other property including Chatham County parks.

In adopting this ordinance, Chatham County is following a trend across North Carolina to create tobacco-free public spaces. An increasing number of counties and municipalities including neighboring Randolph, Orange, Wake and Durham counties have adopted similar policies. The Town of Siler City's tobacco-free ordinance, which prohibits tobacco use in Siler City parks, will also go into effect in 2020.

Tobacco use and secondhand smoke exposure are leading preventable causes of illness and premature death in North Carolina and the nation. There is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke, including secondhand aerosol that is emitted from electronic cigarette products. Chatham County is committed to ensuring that employees, residents and visitors can avoid the risks associated with tobacco while on county grounds.

"We are grateful for the Commissioners and County leadership's support assisting our efforts to reduce tobacco use among Chatham County staff and residents," said Chatham County Public Health Director Layton Long. "Adoption of this ordinance is a clear indication that the Commissioners care about the health of our residents and want to set an example for our youth not to use tobacco products."

Chatham County's tobacco-free grounds ordinance includes a focus on education and supporting those who want to quit using tobacco. The purpose of the policy is to protect people from the harmful effects of tobacco use and encourage tobacco users to quit, and stay quit, while providing supportive environments and effective resources to help them do so.

To learn more about opportunities to quit all types of tobacco, including e-cigarettes and other vaping products, visit chathamnc.org/tobacco cessation or quitlinenc.com.



In-person QuitSmart classes will be held in May 2020. Call 919-545-8445 to find out more about these free classes.

Visit the Chatham County website to review the tobacco-free grounds ordinance at chathamnc.org/tobaccofree.

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