

Governor signs fire-safe cigarette bill into law

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

--Beginning Jan. 1, 2008, only cigarettes that self-extinguish can be sold in Oregon--Salem " Today Governor Ted Kulongoski, joined by legislators, Oregon State Fire Marshal Nancy Orr and members of the Oregon fire service, signed into law legislation (HB 2163) requiring all cigarettes sold in Oregon to be self-extinguishing to prevent accidental fires. Fire-safe cigarettes work by using two or three thin bands of less-porous paper in the wrapper that act as "speed bumps" to slow down a burning cigarette. A conventional cigarette will continue to burn when left unattended. But a fire-safe cigarette, left unattended, will extinguish when the burning tobacco reaches one of these speed bumps. Photo: National Institute of Standards and Technology "Currently cigarettes are a leading cause of fire deaths, injuries and property loss in Oregon," Governor Kulongoski said. "Today we are taking a major step to increase the safety of all Oregonians from accidental fires due to unattended cigarettes." From 1999 through 2005, cigarettes caused 8,824 fires in Oregon resulting in 37 deaths, 185 injuries and more than \$32 million in direct property loss. "The legislature deserves credit for passing this legislation," said Oregon State Fire Marshal Nancy Orr. "The Oregon fire service has been working on this issue for more than 30 years and now we have a law that will significantly reduce the likelihood of fire deaths, injuries, and property loss from unintentional fires caused by cigarettes." Under the legislation, starting January 1, 2008, only fire-safer cigarettes will be legal for sale in Oregon. The fire-safer cigarette technology uses specially designed paper with "speed bumps" to act as small fire breaks restricting the burning of tobacco. When not puffed on, the burning tobacco will reach one of these speed bumps and self-extinguish. "The diverse interests that came together to pass this bill are a testament to its importance in protecting Oregonians. I want to thank State Fire Marshal Nancy Orr for her leadership in bringing all interests to the table from the firefighters to the tobacco industry to deliver consensus on this legislation," said Governor Kulongoski. Oregon now joins eight other states (California, Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Utah, and Vermont) and Canada in passing a fire-safer cigarette law. For more information on fire-safer cigarettes, visit http://www.oregon.gov/OSP/SFM/Oregon_Fire_Safety_COA.shtml

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