

January 15, 2007

## City urged to air approval

**Advocates ask Calgarians to make a point of supporting smoke-free hangouts**  
By [DOUG MCINTYRE](#), CALGARY SUN

With an injunction hearing on the city's butt ban set for today, advocates for a smoke-free city are urging non-smoking Calgarians to support local bars feeling the financial pinch in the wake of the puffing ban.

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart said she hopes to see the public, the vast majority of whom don't light up, to show thanks to proprietors who have cleared the air in their taverns.

"Calgarians have to realize this is a tricky time for business, and they need to go out and support their local pubs," said Colley-Urquhart.

"That includes all of them, because the bars that were flouting the bylaw are falling into line."

Colley-Urquhart's sentiment was echoed by local anti-smoking advocate Robyn Hauck, who said even her friends who are smokers like the new nicotine-free atmosphere.

"I've been telling all my friends and contacts to get out there as a way of thanking the bars for adhering to the bylaw," said Hauck, who last year presented Colley-Urquhart with a 12,000-signature petition for smoke-free public places.

A group of 35 bars and restaurants has launched a challenge against the bylaw on the grounds VLTs comprise the majority of their revenues, thus entitling them to the same one-year exemption granted to bingo halls and casinos.

Although not a member of this anti-smoking rebellion, Bottoms Up Sport Pub owner Spencer Tapley said he's seen a large migration of VLT users from his bar to the establishments where lighting up is permitted until Jan. 1, 2008.

"What city council created was such an unlevel playing field," said Tapley, who added his VLT revenue has dropped 80% since the smoking bylaw was implemented Jan. 1.

"Ninety percent of VLT players smoke, and when given the choice, they have chosen to go and play at the venues where they can smoke."

Tapley added he's noticed a silver lining, namely a spark in business from "people who wouldn't normally go to a smoking venue."

However, an influx of non-smoking clientele has yet to materialize for the Bent Elbow Pub at 1065 Canyon Meadows Dr. S.W., said owner Andy Assad.

"I know down the road that it's going to happen," said Assad, adding his pub has experienced

a \$20,000 decline in business from a year ago.

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## JUST THE FACTS

- A group of 35 local bars and restaurants is seeking an injunction today against the city's smoking bylaw, claiming it has created an uneven playing field.
- The coalition states VLTs generate the bulk of their revenues and is calling for the same one-year exemption granted to casinos, bingos and establishments with pre-existing smoking rooms.
- The group's bid to win a one-year reprieve goes before the courts Feb. 8, but they are seeking a temporary injunction until the matter goes before a judge.
- Calgary's smoking ban, which began Jan. 1, 2007, was fast-tracked from its original timeline of Jan. 1, 2008.
- Since the bylaw began on New Year's Day, the city has received more than 250 complaints about establishments allowing patrons to light up.

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## CONTROVERSIAL PATH TO BUTT-OUT BAN

- April 6, 2005: Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart starts bid to move up ban by a year.
- July 13, 2006: Anti-smoking activist collects 12,000 signatures in favour of ban.
- July 18, 2006: Council delays a decision on the ban for one week.
- July 24, 2006: Council votes 10-5 in favour of bylaw with exemption for smoking rooms.
- Oct. 12, 2006: Bar owners vow legal action over butt-ban on outdoor pub patios.
- Oct. 17, 2006: Council fast-tracks ban, with casinos and bingos exempt for one year.
- Oct. 15, 2006: A group of 35 bars and restaurants files a motion seeking to be granted a one-year exemption.
- Jan. 1, 2007: The smoking bylaw comes into effect.
- Jan. 8, 2007: City receives 254 complaints of bars flaunting the new bylaw.
- Jan. 12, 2007: A sweep finds ban compliance, including those who vowed to allow smoking.