

**NEWS RELEASE**  
**November 27, 2007**

**MASON COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
**411 NORTH 5<sup>TH</sup> ST**  
**SHELTON, WA 98584**

TO: KMAS, KRXV, SHELTON-MASON COUNTY JOURNAL, THE OLYMPIAN, SHELTON  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, NORTH MASON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, CITY OF  
SHELTON, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL, THE SUN

RE: Fresh Air Housing

Smoking causes an estimated 438,000 deaths, or nearly 1 of every 5 deaths, each year in the United States. More deaths are caused by tobacco use than by all deaths from human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), illegal drug use, alcohol use, motor vehicle injuries, suicides, and murders combined. Smoking is not only harmful to smokers, but also to the people around them who are exposed to secondhand smoke. The 2006 Surgeon General's Report concluded that there is no risk-free level of secondhand smoke exposure. Even brief exposure can be dangerous. Nonsmokers who are exposed to secondhand smoke at home or work increase their heart disease risk by 25–30% and their lung cancer risk by 20–30%.

Smoke-free laws, such as Washington's Smoking in Public Places law and Mason County's smoke-free parks and fairgrounds codes, have helped to protect people from secondhand smoke exposure in public places. Now, property owners are beginning to recognize the benefits of implementing smoke-free policies in multi-unit housing. Making rental units smoke-free can save money in cleaning bills, property damage, and insurance costs and protects tenants from secondhand smoke exposure.

Recently, the Mason County Board of Health and Public Health Department commended Alliance Group, Inc. Manager, Shannon McDonald, and tenant, Bart Coventry, of the Fir Tree Apartments in Shelton, for working to implement an anti-smoking policy that prohibits smoking at all entryways, front porches and stairways of their building.

The Board encourages other property owners and landlords to follow the Fir Tree Apartments' lead in providing a safe and healthy environment for their tenants by enacting similar anti-tobacco use policies. Non-smoking bans help protect rental property from damage and fires. As more people become aware of the health hazards of secondhand smoke, the demand for smoke-free housing increases. For more information on providing fresh air housing in multi-unit dwellings, please contact Ben or Heidi at Mason County Public Health, 360-427-9670 ext. 400.

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Lynda Ring Erickson  
Chair

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Tim Sheldon  
Commissioner

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Ross Gallagher  
Commissioner