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All Tobacco Banned on MSU-Owned Property as of August 15 ^[1]

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By:

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As of Aug. 15, 2016, Michigan State University will prohibit all tobacco products from being used on university-owned property. Visitors to campus will not be able to smoke cigarettes, chew tobacco or use e-cigarettes and vaporizers.

MSU is among the last of Big Ten Universities to enact such a ban, and university officials are eager to see how the ban affects MSU's initiative toward a healthier campus culture.

MSU spokesman Jason Cody said the Office of the Provost elected a committee to oversee the ban and ensure all opposing opinions were addressed.

Many students expressed concern that the ban limited their individual freedoms, and even conflicted with the cultures of some international students.

Roxanne Segall, a senior at MSU, was one student with such concerns.

"A majority of the international students smoke, and that may be a part of their culture," she said.

"The university can't force them to quit smoking."

Cody said the university acknowledges the ban inevitably will mean some sort of a lifestyle change for MSU students and employees who smoke. Cessation resources have been made available, free of cost, for individuals who seek help quitting.

"We know the vast majority of folks on campus don't use tobacco. Then you have a group of students and employees who do, and we know this is going to be a lifestyle change for them," Cody said.

"We let them know [about the ban] a year in advance, and we provide free cessation programs for students and employees. We aren't telling anyone they have to quit using they just can't use on campus."

One cessation resource available to MSU students is Nicotine Anonymous, held every Tuesday at 8 p.m., in room 2320 of the MSU Engineering Building.

MSU alumnus Nick Savoy conducts the support group each week, and is supportive of the tobacco ban.

"The ban will raise public awareness about the negative effects of smoking. It will also cause the people who are currently smoking to take a second look at their habits, and what they can do to stop it," Savoy said.

A comprehensive list of available cessation resources can be found here ^[2].

MSU has been preparing for the ban for quite a while, but many students are apprehensive as to how the new rule will be enforced after August 15.

"This ban will only make people break the rule and [smoke] anyway, which means more tickets and money toward the school," Segall said.

"I think it's all a big scheme."

On the contrary, Cody said the university will not enforce the ban with fiscal punishments, like tickets. Rather, the university is hopeful the ban will encourage education about the risks associated with smoking and tobacco products, and thus encourage healthier lifestyles.

"This isn't something MSU police is going to be out there giving tickets for, it's not something to generate revenue. The goal is to have a healthier campus," Cody said.

"We aren't trying to bust people. We're trying to create a culture of a healthier campus. We hope people will respect the rule."

Repeat offenders won't be excused from all punishment, however.

"If the student repeatedly violates the policy, they could face the same repercussions as they do for violating any university policy. I don't see that happening a lot, but it's an option the university has," Cody said.

Many students are eager for a tobacco-free campus. Jayde Glen said she's happy she won't have to deal with lingering second-hand smoke during her commutes to class next fall.

"The [current] law states [smokers] have to be 30 feet away [from the building], or something like that, but no one follows that rule," Glen said.

"I don't want to be around smokers, or smell like smoke."

Supportive of the ban or not, as of Aug. 15, 2016, all MSU-owned properties, both within East Lansing and beyond, will be completely tobacco free.

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