

Study looks at effects of barring smoking

Pollution fell 89% in Bloomington after ban

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Air quality in Indianapolis restaurants and bars is 14 times worse than in Bloomington, where smoking is banned in public places, a study released today by an anti-smoking agency shows.

And particle pollution, which swirls through the air of smoky nightspots, dropped 89 percent after Bloomington's smoke-free ordinance went into effect in January, the study also found.

The report, funded by Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation, will likely boost supporters of the proposed Indianapolis smoking ban being considered by the City-County Council.

"The results of this study couldn't be any more clear," said Mark Travers, a research affiliate with the Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo, N.Y., who authored the report.

Researchers measured air quality in 30 bars and restaurants in Indianapolis, Bloomington and Fort Wayne — though the names of the locations were not released.

Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation was created by the General Assembly to oversee a portion of Indiana's share of the 1998 settlement with the country's largest tobacco manufacturers.

Karla Sneegas, executive director of the agency, said the study's timing was not intended to coincide with Indianapolis' smoking ban debate, but rather to study the effect of Bloomington's ban.

That impact "is very, very evident the minute you start looking at the data," Sneegas said of the large drops in air pollution after Bloomington's ban was enacted.

The group spent about \$5,500 on the report, she said.

Indianapolis' City-County Council is considering a similar smoking ban for restaurants and

Study's findings

■ The level of air pollution in Indianapolis restaurants and bars is 14 times higher than in Bloomington, where smoke-free laws are in place.

■ Air pollution dropped 89 percent in seven venues tested in Bloomington after a smoking ban took effect in January.

■ Employees working an eight-hour shift in the smokiest of Indianapolis' bars and restaurants are exposed to more air pollution than is acceptable for outside air by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

What's next?

The City-County Council's Children's Health and Environment Committee will hold a meeting at 6 p.m. today in Room 260 of the City-County Building, 200 E. Washington St.

patrons under a certain age — perhaps 21 — could be exempted.

After a series of public hearings that took place over seven weeks, the Children's Health and Environment Committee is scheduled to discuss the proposal again tonight.

"I'm hoping it will convince some of our fellow councilors how important the ordinance is," said Democratic Councilman Greg Bowes, who authored the ban. "It confirms for me how dangerous secondhand smoke is."

But Republican Councilman Jim Bradford, a member of the committee and an ardent opponent, said he didn't expect the study would have an impact on the debate, despite its timing.

fund these places."

At Loughmiller's Pub & Eatery near the Statehouse, owner David Livinghouse said he has mixed feelings about calls to ban smoking in bars. Not a smoker himself, he acknowledged the potential hazards of secondhand smoke and said his nonsmoking section is popular with customers.

But, he added, there was strong resistance from some formerly loyal customers three years ago when he created a nonsmoking section, which includes the restaurant's booths.

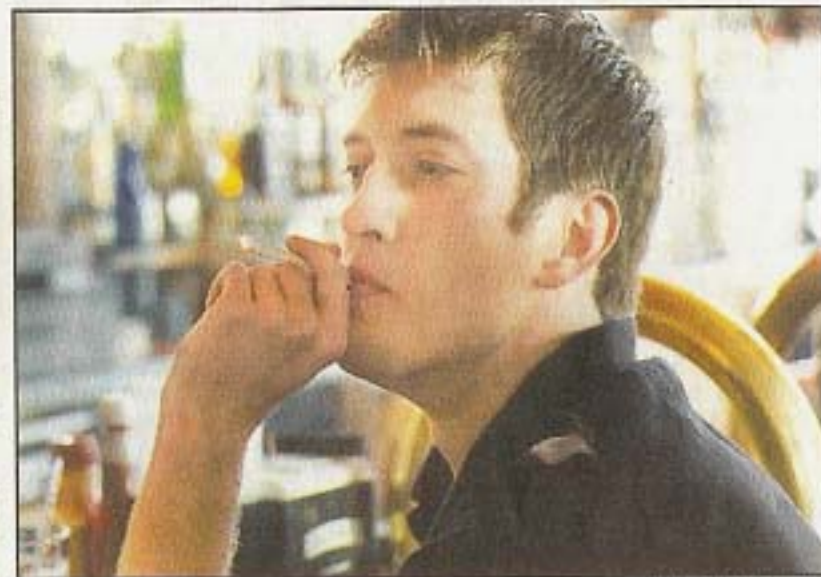
Researchers used a device to measure extremely fine particles in the air, which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said can have serious health effects on the heart and lungs.

The study measured the density of those particles in the air at 13 Indianapolis restaurants and bars and, on average, found 432 milligrams of the particles per cubic meter. That compares with less than 10 milligrams for an average office space where smoking is not permitted.

Grills, stoves and exhaust can also send fine particles into the air and can confuse the air quality measurement devices; however, in Bloomington's case, researchers noticed significant drop-offs in the same locations after smoking was banned.

Dwight Greaves, 27, smoked a cigarette as he made phone calls at the bar in Coaches Tavern Downtown. Greaves works as a part-time DJ and likes having a smoke after work. Still, he understands the need to consider at least a partial ban.

"I understand people who want to take their kids out to dinner," he said, suggesting family-dining restaurants should be smoke-free. "But here, we're all adults."



Rob Coebel / The Star

Smoking debate: Indianapolis' City-County Council is considering a smoking ban for restaurants and bars, which could affect people like Terence Shackelford, seen at The Slippery Noodle. A study found that air quality is worse in Indy than in places with bans.

How the air fares

Air quality in Marion County's restaurants and bars is worse than in other cities that have regulated smoking, according to a new study. The study's authors measured air in 13 Indianapolis locations for fine particles — a kind of pollutant that can come from burning cigarettes. The study also sampled air quality in bars and restaurants in Bloomington before and after a smoking ban went into effect in January. None of the locations was identified.

Amount of pollution*			Percent reduction			
Average cigarettes**			Pollution after ban*			
Number of patrons			Pollution before ban*			
INDIANAPOLIS LOCATIONS			BLOOMINGTON LOCATIONS			
1	225	4	102	309	153	50
2	43	1.25	133	172	10	94
3	38	4.33	605	920	13	99
4	52	10	465	92	18	80
5	27	4.67	681	61	10	84
6	203	10	823	543	45	92
7	86	1.33	33	335	11	97
8	80	3	238			
9	20	.75	79			
10	25	1	95			
11	97	3.67	654			
12	70	4.33	529			
13	33	7.67	1,178			
Average	77	4.31	432	347	37	89

*Average number of milligrams per cubic meter of fine particles.
**Average cigarettes burning at any given time.
Note: The measurement of fine particles in the air can also be affected by other factors, such as grills or nearby exhaust.

Source: Indiana Air Monitoring Study, funded by Indiana Tobacco Prevention and Cessation