



## SOUTH CAROLINA'S 1991 GRASSROOTS ACTIVITY PLAN

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### PLAN OBJECTIVES

1. Help defeat any attempt to increase state excise taxes in 1991.

2. Hold organizational meetings in the remaining cities in the state with a population of 25,000+ that have not yet been organized.
3. As necessary, organize other areas identified as being important based on local, state or federal issues that emerge during the year.
4. Provide assistance and attention necessary to foster groups in all areas where credible SMIGs or 800# callers are identified.
5. Continue to work to build and strengthen the ~~six~~ <sup>existing</sup> groups that were organized in the state in 1989 and 1990.
6. Hold one statewide Leadership Training Seminar.
7. As needed, provide grassroots support on local, state or federal issues of importance to smokers.  
*Encourage local groups to produce local oriented*
8. Design and produce a state-specific Smokers' Rights newsletter for statewide distribution to group ~~leaders~~ <sup>members</sup> and associates.

9. Work with ROR Public Issues in developing coalition capability - state and local

### SITUATION ANALYSIS

- A. Political Outlook - There probably has never been any more turmoil or uncertainty in the SC State Legislature than there is today. More legislators are being indicted monthly for selling their votes and/or using drugs; state and federal agencies are performing massive investigations into their own agencies; and agency directors are being replaced. Public confidence in state government is at an all time low.

The SC Legislature convenes on January 8, 1991 and is scheduled to recess in early June. Much of the early focus of the session will be on ethics legislation. In December, the Budget and Control Board issued its proposed budget, based on a projected revenue increase of \$61.2 million. Immediately the House Ways and Means Committee will begin work on the budget and will begin entertaining proposals for revenue increases. The committee will attempt to have an Appropriations Bill to the full House by February 1, 1991.

Given that previous commitments for FY 91-92 already exceed \$100 million, the pressure to increase revenues will be even greater and the "sin" taxes will probably be the first

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considered.

- B. State Cigarette Excise Tax - The state has not increased its cigarette excise tax since 1977. In 1990, the legislature considered an increase of \$.05 to the existing \$.07 cigarette excise tax; however, this proposal was defeated. In 1991, the Tobacco Institute is forecasting that it is likely that South Carolina will increase its excise tax on cigarettes.

This forecast is consistent with the following facts: the projected revenue shortfall is significant; there has not been an increase in the state excise tax in 20 years; the average state excise tax in the nation is \$.24; the excise tax in neighboring states (except NC) is at least \$.05 per pack higher; and a bill was prefiled (S.251 - Attachment A) in October 1990 to tax cigarettes at 50 cents per pack. While an increase of this magnitude is highly unlikely the probability of some increase in South Carolina's state excise tax is high, especially if North Carolina increases its excise tax.

- C. Smoking Restrictions - In 1990, SC enacted the Clean Indoor Air Act (Attachment B), the best proactive legislation in the nation. The Clean Indoor Air Act restricts smoking, except in designated areas, in: any public indoor areas, public schools, government buildings, health care facilities, elevators, public transportation (except taxicabs), arenas/auditoriums, public theaters or art centers. This act does not preclude a health care facility from being smoke free. Fine upon conviction is not less than \$10 and no more than \$25. The act also prohibits testing of employees to determine whether they have nicotine or other tobacco residue in their system.

Prior to the enactment of the state's Clean Indoor Air Act, the State Attorney General's Office issued an opinion stating that state law generally supersedes local law. However, Oconee County and Goose Creek, SC, subsequently have passed ordinances that are more restrictive than the state law. Now that the law is in effect, the Attorney General has been asked for another opinion, and the RJR and TI lobbyists feel that he will again rule that state law preempts local law. The only other pending local legislation in SC is in Greenwood where a smoking ban in government buildings and vehicles has been proposed.

- C. Anti-Discrimination Law - In June 1990, Governor Campbell signed an anti-discrimination law that prohibits considering the use of tobacco products outside the workplace as the basis for personnel action, including, but not limited to, employment, termination, demotion, or promotion of an employee. (Attachment C).
- D. Anti-Smoking Forces - Last year, anti-smoking lobbying efforts

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of the lung, heart and cancer associations were performed by one person, Moses Clarkson. It is not known whether these anti-smoking groups will continue utilizing only one person to represent them in 1991.

#### GRASSROOTS NETWORK

A. Existing Smokers' Rights Groups -- There are six organized smokers' rights groups in South Carolina. All groups meet on a monthly basis.

1. Columbia: Mediocre group. Re-organized in September 1990. Has delivered petitions and met with US Reps & Senators.
2. Charleston: New group. Organized November 1990. Three dependable leaders.
3. Greenville: Strong group. Media experience and very energetic. Good leaders. Has delivered petitions and met with US Senator.
4. Spartanburg: Strong and dependable group. Group has met on a monthly basis for over a year. Good leaders. Has delivered petitions and met with US Senator and Representative.
5. Florence: Was a strong group, now a weak group due to negative interaction with RJR Tobacco Festival personnel. Media experience. Has delivered petitions and met with US Representative. This group is in the tobacco growing area of the state.
6. Anderson: Strong group. Media experience and very energetic. A good leader with "unending" energies. Delivered petitions and met with US Representative.

(See complete Group Census Report -- Attachment D.)

B. Maintenance of Existing Groups - At least one visit will be made to each active group during the year and multiple visits will be made where needed. Every group leader will be called immediately before and after their monthly meeting. Calling before enables discussion of the issues/topics to be covered and calling the leader after the meeting provides feedback of how the meeting went and any problems that need to be addressed. During the call, an assessment of the strength of the group and leader is made to determine whether further attention is needed, and an informed decision can be made on whether or not to attend the group's next meeting.

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- C. Strengthening Existing Groups - A Leadership Training Seminar is scheduled for Saturday, January 26. A survey was mailed to active group members in December, and the Leadership Training Seminar will be highly publicized at local group meetings in January and by special State Rep mailings.

The Leadership Training Seminar will begin a process to be completed during 1991 which will more fully involve group members and make their work more rewarding. It is planned: 1) to train and use active group members to visit other groups and assist in both start-up and renewal of other groups; 2) to involve group leaders in periodic problem-solving and planning meetings on legislative issues and means of more effectively extending their influence across the state; 3) to enhance State Rep's effectiveness by acting as mentors to new or weak groups; and 4) to design and implement a major positive media campaign based on charitable or civic activity undertaken collectively by SC Smokers' Rights Groups.

#### ORGANIZATIONAL EFFORTS

- A. Forming New Groups - Organizational meetings will be held in Beaufort, Rock Hill and Sumter in mid-January so that leaders from these areas can participate in the Leadership Training Seminar, scheduled for January 26.

1. Beaufort (pop. 100,000+ \*) - State Senator Jim Waddell is Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, a senior senator, and a smoker. Although he is considered "tobacco friendly," it would help maintain his resolve to have a group that supports him in that area. Waddell has become much more responsive to constituent groups since narrow victories in his last two elections.

\* Beaufort has a population of less than 25,000; however, with the population of Hilton Head and the surrounding counties (within 30 to 45 minutes driving time) the population exceeds 100,000.

2. Rock Hill (pop. 44,000) - Rock Hill already has an active SMIG that has received media attention from the delivery of petitions to US Representative John Spratt.
3. Sumter (pop. 31,000) - Three persons from Sumter have already attended a Smokers' Rights Meeting held in Florence and Lancaster and would like to see a group organized in their area.
4. Myrtle Beach (pop. 30,000) - Due to the transient population associated with the tourism-industry, and the need to organize Beaufort, Rock Hill and Sumter prior to the Leadership Training Seminar planned for January 26, it is recommended that Myrtle Beach not be organized

until later in the year.

- B. Remote Start-Ups and 800# Callers - All seriously interested persons will be encouraged to start-up groups in areas where there are no organized groups. All 800# callers and potential remote start-up leaders receive a letter and packet of smokers' rights information which either (1) refers the caller to an existing group with a copy of the letter to the leader of the group and the leader is encouraged to call the interested person; or (2) the person is informed that there is not an organized group in their area but that if they are interested in organizing a group to write or call back stating so. If a person does write or call back, he/she is immediately called to assess interest, ability and energy. The remote start-up package is mailed to the individual with more information on how to start a group and a list of interested persons in that area if that information is available. In two to three weeks the person is called again to determine the caller's continued interest and progress.
- C. "Discipleship Program" - There is an elite group of leaders - 3 to 5 in South Carolina -- who would be willing "to go the extra mile" on behalf of smokers' rights. Specifically, they would be willing to travel within the state to meet with other smokers who are genuinely interested in forming local groups. This approach will be tested and, if successful, it will be used to make face-to-face visits with some of the serious 800# callers and potential remote start-up leaders. These "disciples" would also be willing to meet with groups such as the VFW, American Legion, etc., that would be interested in smoking-related issues. There is nothing better for a person who is motivated to create change than to have the opportunity to "tell the story." To talk about ETS or how to start a group, the leader would need a video, appropriate printed materials and further State Rep. assistance to ensure adequate preparation. When potential recruits witness the commitment of another smoker (not RJR paid) a powerful statement is made. This would, however, require assistance to pay for mileage, lodging or meals, if overnight, through the State Rep's expense account.

#### 1991 GROUP ACTIVITIES

- A. Political Involvement - All groups will be trained and encouraged to become more involved in the political process. This training will begin at the Leadership Training Seminar. To continue this process, a trip to the state capital will be planned and executed prior to April 30, 1991 for South Carolina smokers to meet with their members of the Legislature and to tour the State House. Groups will be encouraged to invite their elected officials (federal, state and local) to be guest speakers at their monthly meetings and groups will become more actively involved in community service projects

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i.e., donations of monies, food, time to charity families and/or organizations. All of this involvement would include media attention on the groups as Smokers' Rights Groups.

- B. Earned Media Programs - Beginning at the Leadership Training Seminar, and continuing during the year, the State Rep will work with all local groups to improve their skills in dealing with the media. Groups will look for opportunities throughout the year to gain positive media coverage on behalf of smokers' rights.
- C. Statewide Newsletter - Development of a South Carolina Smokers' Rights Newsletter is planned with the first issue encouraging participation in the Leadership Training Seminar. A statewide newsletter has been requested by numerous group members. The information for the newsletter would come from each group on a monthly basis with distribution of the newsletter to all active members on alternate months when Choice is not published. The newsletter would help keep members up-to-date on issues and would publicize the successes of other groups.
- D. Sporting Events, Fairs, Tobacco Festivals, Flea Markets - Each group will be asked to become actively involved in at least one sporting event, fair, festival or flea market, e.g., the Winston Cup, the Darlington Raceway, State or County Fairs, tobacco and other festivals. This will be accomplished through staffing a booth (either with or instead of RJR PR personnel) or volunteering to perform some visible functions as an identified Smokers' Rights group.
- E. Coalitions/Allied Forces - Since South Carolina is one of the major tobacco growing states, group members will become more involved in the allied forces network. Specific arrangements will be made for chosen group members to attend Tobacco Warehouse Association meetings, meetings with Department of Agriculture and Farm Bureau officials, Vending Machines Associations, VFW's, etc., to build rapport with these organizations and make them aware there is another organized network supporting tobacco issues.
- F. ETS - Educating groups on the ETS issue will be accomplished in SC in 1991. A video would be excellent; however, a simple, explicit brochure that could be spread among the group members, sent to persons calling the 800#, distributed at flea markets, fairs booths, etc., would reach more people without the logistical problems of VCRs, TVs, etc. Regardless of what other resources are produced, the SC Newsletter will ensure that every member is educated on the ETS issues.
- G. Workplace Smoking - State Rep will work with all local groups to ensure they monitor what is occurring with workplace smoking issues. Leaders will be encouraged to monitor and report any businesses that consider restricting smoking, not

only where they and the members of the group are employed, but also within the community where the group is located. At their places of employment, group members will be encouraged to volunteer to serve on ad hoc employee/management or union committees. This proactive approach will help to ensure that smokers are well represented on committees that could determine how a company's smoking policy is shaped.

As workplace issues emerge during the year, the State Rep will work with local groups and/or 800# callers in an effort to make such policies fair to all employees.

#### PLAN TIME LINE

See Attachment E for 1991 Time line.

#### NEEDS FOR THE PROGRAM

- A. Secretarial Support - Over the last year, emphasis has been on organizing groups in three states, or building groups in terms of numbers. Now that most of these planned groups have been organized, it is essential to provide these groups the POWER. Specifically, it is planned that the State Rep's emphasis will be on more quality time providing information, sharing ideas, holding "think tanks" with group leaders, more face-to-face meetings with the chosen few leaders, etc., to increase their level of awareness and functioning--their POWER. In order to accomplish this, continual secretarial assistance is necessary. These clerical/secretarial tasks involve, among other things: (1) group logistical support such as updating lists; sending materials, postcards, labels; (2) responding in writing to 800# callers; (3) keeping petitions copied/sorted; (4) running errands to obtain stamps, office supplies, UPS; (5) preparing for SRM's and Follow-up meetings; and (6) preparing mass mailings. At present this would require a person 15 to 25 hours per week (approximately one-half time) to accomplish the administrative/support tasks required.