



Smoking foes demand users pocket rising health costs

The health costs of cigaret smoking in the U.S. have reached a staggering \$27 billion every year, according to this year's Surgeon General's report, paid for by smokers and nonsmokers.

During the last decade more than three million Americans have died from alleged cigarette-related diseases. Although there is no way to calculate the physical and emotional suffering involved, there are ways to calculate the financial costs.

Attempts have been made to shift some of the financial burden from the shoulders of those who do not smoke. At least 32 American insurance companies now offer significant discounts of up to 20 percent to nonsmokers — for health, accident, fire, and life policies.

Concerned observers are proposing further shifts. Dr. Blake Cady of the Luby Clinic Foundation in Boston suggests a "health tax" be added to each pack of cigarettes. The monies would go into a special fund for smoking-related medical expenses.

Insurance companies and Blue Cross/Blue Shield could apply to this fund to cover medical expenses caused by smoking. In turn, insurance companies and Blue Cross would be required to reduce their health insurance premiums for everyone — in proportion to

the monies they received from the fund.

Devising ways to lighten the financial burden on nonsmokers of the health costs of smoking poses great complexities. But it is becoming an issue.

One way to eliminate the burden, says the American Lung Association of Southeastern Michigan, is to convince smokers to value their own lungs and lives. To help the Lung Association start reversing a national tragedy, answer your Christmas Seal letter today. It's a matter of life and breath.

Interim head of OU named

Vice Provost George T. Matthews, 63, of Rochester has been named interim president of Oakland University until the board hires a successor to Donald O'Dowd. On Jan. 1, O'Dowd will become executive vice chancellor of the State University of New York.

A native of New York, Matthews earned his three degrees in history from Columbia University.

Matthews joined OU when it was founded in 1959 as associate professor of history. He was chairman of the history department from 1961-63, associate dean for humanities from 1962-65, first dean of the College of Arts and Sciences from 1965-72 and became vice provost this year.

In related action, the OU board named Lando J. Hetenyi executive secretary to the presidential search committee. Hetenyi is acting dean of the School of Performing Arts.

The eight-member board of trustees, chaired by David B. Lewis, will act as the selection committee, aided by four advisory committees — faculty, students, alumni and administrative staff.

Vanpool rolls for Rockwell workers

At a savings of 41 gallons of gasoline a day, a dozen Rockwell International employees are taking a vanpool to work.

Rockwell is one of 19 employers the road commission has been working with to set up vanpools.

They work at the automotive operations headquarters in Troy. Previously, each drove alone an average of 60 miles daily, according to the Oakland County Road Commission, which worked to set up the vanpool.

Besides saving gasoline, this vanpool reduces the number of vehicles on county roads by 11 and reduces air pollution.

"This is a milestone we have looking forward to since we began offering assistance to employers," said road commission Chairman Fred D. Houghton.

Riders pay monthly fares of \$50.37. Previously, they had been spending an average of \$92 monthly for gasoline alone for work trips.

'Boss of year'

Judge Frederick C. Ziem of the Oakland Circuit Court was voted "boss of the year" by the Oakland County Legal Secretaries Association. More than 200 persons attended the celebration at which he was presented a plaque at the annual Boss's Night dinner. A judge since 1960, Ziem was previously county prosecutor for four terms.

Employee aid seminar set

How to implement an employee assistance program will be the topic of a three-hour seminar offered by Personal Performance Consultants, Inc. on Friday, Nov. 30 in the Troy Hilton Inn, Hialeah at Stephenson.

The seminars are designed for corporate executives, personnel directors and employee relations specialists. An employee assistance program provides confidential counseling and referral services to workers whose performances are impaired by personal problems.

The seminar runs from 9 a.m. to noon and costs \$15. To inquire or register, call the consulting firm, toll-free, at (800) 325-3982 ext. 304.

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The Observer & Eccentric Newspapers

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