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# Smoking bans may mean big business

**By M.R. Kropko**

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CLEVELAND — When Ohio voters last fall banned smoking in public places, Richard Stone got inspired to try to quit his 15-year, pack-a-day cigarette habit.

"If I go to a bar, I want to enjoy myself and not think I have to get up every 10 minutes and go outside to have a smoke," said Stone, 30.

Stone said he had tried using a nicotine-replacement patch, but gave up and lit up. So this time he shelled out some cash to a hypnotist who's combining his nightclub act with a push to quit smoking.

One man's inspiration to stop smoking can be another man's business opportunity — from hypnotists to makers of cigarette-substitute products, anti-smoking pills, nicotine-replacement therapies and more — though it's too soon to say whether tougher smoking bans will translate into bigger business.

Ohio, Arizona and Nevada passed comprehensive smoking bans in the November election. Nevada's exempts casino gaming floors and has been challenged in the courts. Arizona's ban starts in May, and Ohio is finalizing enforcement rules.

The states joined Delaware, Hawaii, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island and Washington in prohibiting smoking in all private workplaces, restaurants and bars. California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maine and Vermont ban smoking in all restaurants and bars.

The National Bureau of Economic Research Inc. a year ago estimated that smoking-cessation ventures overall had retail sales of nearly \$1 billion annually and were spending more than \$100 million annually on advertising. Its report did not include amounts spent before the surge in bans.

Stone, a carpenter's helper, was among 50 people at a group hypnotism session in Cleveland. Afterward, he threw away his pack of cigarettes and had no craving to smoke a few days later. He said he isn't sure why, other than a renewed urge to be a nonsmoker.

The therapy, he said, was "weird, like I slept for two days."

The hypnotist, Los Angeles-based performer Rich Guzzi, was advertised as a quit-smoking act at comedy club Pickwick & Frolic right next to a new "no smoking" sign Ohio's law requires.

Guzzi said he hopes to help 100,000 people nationwide quit smoking at \$50 per ticket.

"That's a fair price for a fair program, and it's not like I'm making a killing on it," said Guzzi, 44, who says he is certified as a hypnotist from two national organizations.

Hypnotherapy in a nightclub might work but probably isn't the best quitting approach, said Jane Pernotto Ehrman, a therapist at the Cleveland Clinic who combines hypnotism with counseling.

Her treatment is always one-on-one, in an office, and involves conversation to get at what motivates a person to smoke.

Ray Tucke, president of Laser Innovations, based in Bradenton, Fla., is getting a piece of the quit-smoking market by using lasers on points on the body that he believes helps smokers stop.

"We're getting more interest lately," Tucke said. "No matter what you try, the main thing is a person has to be ready to quit."

The bans have been good to some of the nation's largest companies.

Sales of products such as nicotine-reduction therapies, including nonprescription Nicorette gum and NicoDerm CQ patch and the prescription drug Zyban, have spiked where smoking bans are in place, said Jennifer May, a spokeswoman in Pittsburgh for GlaxoSmithKline Consumer Healthcare, which makes those products. May would not discuss specific sales numbers. The company is part of London-based GlaxoSmithKline, which had more than \$37 billion in sales last year.

Sales research company MarketResearch.com recently estimated that sales of over-the-counter smoking-cessation products will grow to \$809 million nationally by 2009, up from \$799 million in 2004.

Orders for "no smoking" signs surged, and sales of artificial cigarettes and nicotine-reduction filters were strong last year at QuitSmoking.com, a company based in Cumming, Ga., that sells quitting products, said Fred Kelley, company president.

But since nationwide orders are placed without the customers' having to disclose a reason, he could not say if smoking bans might be helping business.

Most states now have some sort of smoking restriction, usually in public buildings, and the number with highly restrictive bans has grown from two in 2002 to 16 this year, once Arizona is included in May.

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