

Waseca latest city to raise tobacco sales age to 21

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Tuesday night, Waseca city council members voted to raise the city's tobacco sales age to 21.

The city joins 18 other cities - including **Edina**, **St. Louis Park**, **Bloomington**, **Plymouth**, North Mankato, Shoreview, **Falcon Heights**, **Minneapolis**, **St. Peter**, **Richfield**, **Roseville**, **Minnetonka**, Excelsior, Lauderdale, Hermantown, Brooklyn Center, Mendota Heights, and Eden Prairie - and two counties in Minnesota to pass Tobacco 21 policies.

"I started smoking when I was 13 years old; I had no support back then," Waseca Council Member Daren Arndt said Tuesday. "I stopped smoking 25 years ago, but I wish I'd never started. Tobacco 21 is all about supporting our young people and leading our community and state to a healthier tomorrow."

The vote in Waseca Tuesday followed on the heels of the U.S. surgeon general's calling for urgent action in response to a surge in e-cigarette use among teens.

The surgeon general reported new federal data shows e-cigarette use among American youth is rising at an alarming rate.

"Minnesota leaders should do more to combat the epidemic of youth nicotine addiction," Molly Moilanen, vice president at ClearWay Minnesota and co-chair of Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation, said in a statement. "Raising the tobacco age to 21 is a common sense way to keep addictive tobacco products away from kids and prevent young people from ever starting."

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