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Business-to-Business Web Site Launched to Oppose Cigarette Tax Hikes, Smoking Bans

WINSTON-SALEM, N.C., June 10, 2004 – Business owners and operators searching for ways to oppose cigarette excise tax increases and smoking bans now have a new tool at their disposal thanks to R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company (RJRT).

“We often hear from business owners who tell us that they are being forced to lay off employees, or even close their doors, because of burdensome cigarette excise tax increases and unreasonably restrictive smoking bans,” said Ron Cole, manager of legislative support for RJRT. “Working closely with our information technology and sales departments, we decided to do something about it.”

Earlier this month, RJRT launched BusinessTobaccoAlliance.com, a Web site where cigarette wholesalers and retailers, restaurant and bar owners and operators, and others can sign up and become more proactive in opposing legislation that hurts their businesses.

“Once registered, business owners will have access to a personalized Web page that lists their state and federal legislators’ contact information,” said Cole. “In addition, they’ll receive notification when anti-tobacco measures are being considered, as well as gain access to a Tax Impact Calculator enabling them to estimate potential gross profit losses from cigarette tax increases. Also, they’ll become part of an organization with common interests and common goals.”

To become a member of BusinessTobaccoAlliance.com, business owners and operators can go to the Web site and complete the membership registration page. Once registered, they will receive information on tobacco-related legislation being considered at the local, state, and federal levels.

“Our hope is that not only will thousands of business owners become members of BusinessTobaccoAlliance.com,” said Cole, “but that they’ll encourage their employees and other members of the business community to join as well.”

R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company (RJRT) is a wholly owned subsidiary of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Holdings, Inc. (NYSE: RJR). R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company is the second-largest tobacco company in the United States, manufacturing about one of every four cigarettes sold in the United States. Reynolds Tobacco's product line includes four of the nation's 10 best-selling cigarette brands: Camel, Winston, Salem and Doral. For more information about RJRT, visit the company's web site at www.RJRT.com.

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