



# THE TOBACCO FREE TIMES

## TFC-DOS Director Reflects on 2020

It is hard to believe we are in the last month of 2020, a year that felt more like a decade at times. We head into 2021 both humbled by the difficult challenges 2020 brought us and grateful for the renewed focus on public health.

Even in the midst of what is arguably the biggest public health crisis of our lifetimes, we can pause and find reasons to be thankful. In the past year, significant public health gains in tobacco control have been delivered to NYS residents. These new laws will save lives, reduce the rates of tobacco-related diseases, and reduce the number of youth who start using tobacco and become lifelong users.

### State and Local Laws Passed:

1. An end to the sale of ALL flavored e-cigarettes, **including menthol**, in NYS.
2. Ending online delivery of e-cigarettes to private homes in NYS.
3. No more outdoor displays of tobacco products and tobacco product advertising near K-12 schools in New York State.
4. The end of tobacco sales in pharmacies in NYS.
5. The Village of Cooperstown extended its no-smoking-in-parks



ordinance to include no vaping.

6. The Village of Cobleskill banned tobacco use in its parks.
7. Oneonta's Huntington Memorial Library banned tobacco use in its park.
8. The Otsego County Chamber of Commerce voted to support TFC-DOS' Be Safe. Be Kind. campaign.
9. The NYS Smokers' Quitline began offering up to a 3-month supply of free nicotine gum in August. Call-866-NY-QUITS (1-866-697-8487) or visit <https://www.nysmokefree.com>

Because smokers and e-cigarette users can be more susceptible to coronavirus and to developing severe versions of COVID-19 if they catch the virus, these new tobacco controls will also help mitigate those factors.

**Be SAFE. Be KIND.**  
BUSINESS

In response to COVID-19, businesses across New York have been working tirelessly to keep their customers and employees safe. The resilience and ingenuity of the entire business community has perhaps never been more important to community health and economic recovery.

As a business owner, you can take an additional step to protect the health of your employees and customers by participating in the "Be safe. Be kind." campaign and keeping smoking and vaping away from your building's entrances.

**Participation IS EASY**

- Post "Be safe. Be kind." window cling (and table tent, if appropriate).
- Encourage employees and customers to keep smoke/vape away from business entrance.
- Ensure that employees who smoke/vape and want to quit know what help is available.

**Benefits ARE MANY**

- Protects customers and employees from potential harm caused by exposure to secondhand smoke and aerosolized vape emissions.
- Supports employee health and wellness.
- Is responsive to the majority of NYS residents who support smoke-free access to public buildings.
- Improves curb appeal by reducing tobacco litter and loitering.

**Wash hands. Keep distance. Wear a mask.**  
**Be SAFE. Be KIND.**

We at TFC-DOS know better days lie ahead. May you all have healthy holidays and join us in celebrating the coming New Year.

*Judy Rightmyer*





# How the Tobacco Industry Uses Rural Americans' Core Values Against Them

By Chris Bradley and Jennifer Hill

**S**trength. Resilience. Self-reliance. These are attributes of many Americans living in rural areas, but they are not mere descriptions. They have been essential to survival and are deeply embedded, revered values

It is painfully ironic, then, that the tobacco industry has successfully used these core rural values to hook people on its products. As in urban environments, the industry seeks to get youth trying tobacco products so they become addicted early on. Tobacco corporations know about 95% of adult smokers begin smoking before they turn 21. Once they start, they are often hooked for life.

The industry also knows tobacco use rates are much higher in rural areas than in urban ones. Overall, rural populations are more likely to start smoking at earlier ages, smoke in greater quantities and be exposed to secondhand smoke more than urbanites.

We see this discrepancy in New York State. Our rural counties of Delaware, Otsego and Schoharie counties have smoking rates of 23.4, 19.7 and 18.1 percent, respectively. New York City's smoking rate is 9.6 percent

A myriad of factors causes the wide discrepancies, but a big one is psychological, which the tobacco industry effectively exploits in its advertising. As seen in the featured Skoal tobacco chew ad, the



A tobacco ad appealing to youth and rural values, such as outdoorsmanship and ruggedness.

tobacco industry incorporates rural ideals in its advertising — images of rugged, self-sufficient men and accompanying pro-tobacco messages.

The Skoal ad is also promoting flavored chew because the tobacco industry knows youth prefer products with candy, fruit, and mint flavors over the harsh taste of plain tobacco.

The good news is, most people in the DOS region are aware of what the tobacco industry is up to. In Siena College Research Institute's 2020 survey on tobacco use in the area, an average of 75 percent of residents agreed that candy and

fruit flavors added to tobacco products makes it easier for youth to start using these products. Two-thirds of DOS residents in the tricounty area support banning the sale of tobacco products in stores near schools.

The tobacco industry has been addicting and devastating families across New York State for far too long. But communities can act. TFC-DOS' Reality Check program works to empower youth in Delaware, Otsego and Schoharie counties to become leaders against the tobacco industry in their communities and New York State. Our youth leaders and advocates work to save lives; for more information on joining Reality Check and protecting the health of our communities, contact Youth Engagement Coordinator Christopher Bradley at [christopher.bradley@sphp.com](mailto:christopher.bradley@sphp.com).

**Get the gift of freedom - from addiction! Order Your FREE Nicotine Gum Now!**

