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NEWS RELEASE

### **Ordinance Unanimously Passes to Keep Tobacco Out of Teens' Hands**

**El Paso County, Colo.** – Manitou Springs and Fountain are among the first communities in Colorado to pass a tobacco licensing ordinance aimed at reducing underage tobacco use.

Manitou Springs City Council unanimously approved a new city ordinance Tuesday, Nov. 15, that allows stricter enforcement for the illegal sales of tobacco to minors. Fountain's city council unanimously passed a similar ordinance Oct. 11. Steamboat Springs passed an ordinance in July.

The new laws will become effective Jan. 1, 2012 and require non-cigarette tobacco retailers to obtain an annual retail license. Non-cigarette tobacco products include chew or spit tobacco, cigars, snus, sticks, orbs, strips, electronic cigarettes, and hookah.

Both communities adopted the following additional provisions:

- Minors younger than 18 are not permitted to sell, stock or handle non-cigarette tobacco products.
- Self-service displays of any non-cigarette tobacco products are prohibited.
- If a retailer receives four violations within one year, their license to sell non-cigarette tobacco may be suspended or revoked.

"We're proud of Fountain and Manitou Springs to be among the first communities to further restrict youth access to non-cigarette tobacco products," said Kiti Hall, the Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership (TEPP) supervisor at El Paso County Public Health. "Tobacco retailer licensing is an effective method to help reduce youth access to tobacco products and hold retailers accountable for selling tobacco products to minors."

Despite an existing law prohibiting the sale of tobacco to minors, a 2008 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey found that more than 60 percent of Colorado youth under the age of 18 who attempted to purchase tobacco reported being able to do so, and nearly half of the kids who purchased tobacco illegally say they were not asked to show any proof of age. This ordinance is intended to lower these statistics.

"It was a real pleasure to work on this effort," said Marc Snyder, mayor of Manitou Springs. "I was especially impressed by the many outstanding high school students who advocated so passionately for the adoption of these ordinances."

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death. More than 4,300 Coloradans die each year from smoking-related illnesses. Nearly 90 percent of adult smokers become addicted to tobacco before the age of 18.

“My hope is that this ordinance will contribute to overall prevention efforts aimed at helping youth resist tobacco use and potentially negative health consequences,” said Fountain Mayor Jeri Howells.

The local ordinances were introduced by the Tobacco Education and Prevention Partnership at El Paso County Public Health, Fountain Valley Community Activity and Nutrition group, Partners for Healthy Choices, and students and teachers of Fountain-Fort Carson and Manitou Springs school districts. For more information, contact:

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