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FOR THE TOBACCO INSTITUTE, INC.

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SUBJECT Campaign to Discourage Youth Smoking

MELANY BERRY: You're listening to Perspective on WZZK. I'm Melany Berry.

Our next guests on this program are representatives of the Tobacco Institute. We will be talking about an advertising campaign aimed at discouraging children and teenagers from smoking. Our guests are Tom Lauria, a spokesman for the Tobacco Institute, and Jolly Ann Davidson, an educational consultant to the Tobacco Institute.

First off, thank you both for agreeing to be on the program.

JOLLY ANN DAVIDSON [T.I. Educational Consultant]: Thank you, Melany.

TOM LAURIA [Tobacco Institute Spokesman]: Nice to be here.

BERRY: Tom, we need to establish for our audience up front who the Tobacco Institute is. You represent the people who make cigarettes.

LAURIA: And other tobacco products.

BERRY: Okay.

LAURIA: And as such, we handle their lobbying, public affairs and legal matters in state capitals and in the capital of Washington, DC.

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BERRY: Okay. So this organization that you're speaking for is funded by the tobacco industry.

LAURIA: Exclusively. We -- the Tobacco Institute does not organize smokers rights groups. It is not a manufacturer or marketer of tobacco products. We're the public affairs arm of the industry and, when need be, the lobbying arm.

BERRY: Okay. A big PR campaign you have going right now or are launch -- that you're launching is aimed at teenagers. What are you trying to get across? What are you trying to do?

LAURIA: Well, we've had a long-standing policy not to develop communications that would encourage kids to smoke. But recently, in December of 1990, we decided that we needed to take a tougher stand than ever. The public concern was as high as it's ever been, and so we decided, after much deliberation, to announce a five-point program that would discourage youth from starting to smoke.

We have initiated a retail awareness campaign called "It's the Law." We'll get into that in some detail. That's for people who sell tobacco products. We want to help them keep cigarettes out of the hands of kids.

We have decided to intensify a program that we started back in 1984 to give information to parents on how to discourage their children from smoking and how they can help their children tackle the issue of peer pressure. And with me on the media tour to discuss these issues is Jolly Ann Davidson who can address that in much more detail. But we've also done a few other things.

In the marketing area we have voluntarily stopped distributing free public samples -- free samples of cigarettes in public, I should say. And we have taken other measures such as producing promotional items only in adult sizes such as baseball caps and T-shirts.

We are limiting the location of our billboards, and we are no longer going to pay to have tobacco products in movies. Very often, you know, there's thousands of industries that pay a lot of money to have their products featured in a film. We no longer do that.

On the whole, we feel that the measure will inform the public of the industry's serious commitment to discourage youth from smoking. We don't want these kids for customers. We're satisfied with the market of adults who continue to want our products, and we are as concerned as the next person when we see teenagers smoking when they are -- it's illegal for them to do, and when their parents and others may not very well want them to.

BERRY: So what are you going to do to try to discourage teenagers from smoking?

LAURIA: Well, right now Jolly Ann and I are on a media tour to let parents and retailers and other members of the public know what is available for free from the Tobacco Institute to help answer these -- their serious concern.

DAVIDSON: I think the most important aspect of the program, Melany, is the booklet, "Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No." It's a booklet designed for parents to help them as they work with their youngsters in understanding and coping with peer pressure, because peer pressure is the number one reason why kids try smoking, and try a variety of things, actually.

BERRY: Uh-hum. Right.

DAVIDSON: The booklet gives parents actual techniques to use with their youngsters so that they can, indeed, learn how to say no to tobacco. The techniques suggested work equally as well to discourage other activities.

The booklet's free of charge. Your listeners may write to: The Tobacco Institute, Post Office Box 41130, Washington, DC 20018, and ask for their free copy of the booklet, "Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No."

It's used in a family situation with parent and child. However, we find there are a lot of individuals who, after they receive their first copy of the booklet, are either an educator or work with a youth group, and then write back for multiple free copies to use, say at a parent-teachers meeting, or if they're a teacher, to use in a parent-teacher conference. That type of thing.

BERRY: What are some other components? You're going to send out booklets to whoever request them, but do you have any more visible campaign? I mean, there are smoking billboards, there are smoking ads in magazines, there's all kinds of advertising messages encouraging people to smoke. Are you spending any real advertising dollars on discouraging smoking?

DAVIDSON: Yes, indeed we are. In fact, there are advertising dollars being spent on full-page ads in magazines also ads in newspapers advertising this booklet. If you happen to see this month's copy of Ladies Home Journal or Ebony or McCalls, you'll find an ad with a coupon in it that parents then, or grandparents, whoever, may write in for their free copy.

Another thing that we're doing, not in the advertising vein, but I think that certainly will be discouraging young people,

is that there's a consortium working with me -- they worked with me on the development of this booklet -- individuals who are not only educators, but we have a youth minister, an attorney who is active in juvenile justice in the state of Oregon, a number of individuals with expertise in working with families; children and parents.

All of the individuals within that consortium are working to promote not only the use of the booklet but we're doing workshops in larger groups. We have a speakers bureau supplying speakers to organizations that may wish to hear more about the subject of peer pressure or discouraging young people from smoking.

BERRY: Cigarette companies still seem to target a lot of their advertising and marketing at younger people. I mean, just open most magazines, the ads for cigarettes show young, attractive women smoking cigarettes. It makes it look like smoking is fun and smoking is cool. Obviously, the ads are designed to sell cigarettes.

Why do you -- I can understand why you're offering this alternative, helping kids say no, and so forth. But if you were really serious about discouraging teen smoking, wouldn't you be encouraging tobacco companies to drop their ad campaigns that feature young people smoking cigarettes, that glamorize something that leads to death.

DAVIDSON: Well, there are a couple of things. First of all, all the research shows that advertising really isn't what causes kids to smoke. Even the former Surgeon General, Koop...

BERRY: Okay. But why would they be advertising?

DAVIDSON: Well, they're advertising for people to either switch brands or remain loyal to the brand that they have. And Tom is able to address that better than I am. But as far as children go, they're really not that interested in the advertising. And certainly, you know, every product that advertisers use glamorous models, there is a stipulation, a limitation in all cigarette advertising by the companies that they may not use anyone under the age of 18.

And one of the initiatives -- and I think Tom mentioned it -- was the initiative that, as of December, there will be no more billboards space rented within 500 feet of schools or places of activity for youngsters.

And then besides that, Melany, I think it's important that we are cognizant of the fact that kids do not live in an information vacuum anymore than we, as adults, do. And so, sure, they're going to see some of these things, and as parents, it's our responsibility to visit with them about it.

BERRY: There was a study that came out about a week or two ago that suggested that children -- or that -- said -- that had found that children of smokers are more likely to grow up to be smokers themselves; that children who grow up in households where there's cigarette smoke are more likely to have respiratory problems than children from similar families that don't grow up around cigarette smoke.

Are you doing anything to discourage parents from smoking? I mean, the parental role model seems to be a tremendous influence on getting kids to smoke.

LAURIA: In fact, it probably is. But I think that would be up to the individual parents. After all, after someone attains adulthood, they can -- they are privileged to do a lot of things in society that children are not. And I think it would be up to the individual parents to assess for themselves the amount of influence they have or are not having on their children.

We are not directly giving parents messages about smoking, because, as adults, that's their decision. But we are giving them messages on how to talk to their children, whether they smoke or not, about not starting to smoke.

DAVIDSON: And I do think that the techniques that are suggested in the booklet work equally as well for a parent who smokes as one who does not.

Now, I recognize the fact that it's always tougher to say to a youngster...

[Confusion of voices]

DAVIDSON: ... "Do as I say, not as I do."

BERRY: Look. I mean, how is that going to work?

DAVIDSON: Yeah. Well, I mean I think you have to -- there are a lot of things we do as adults that we don't want our youngster to do. I'm a non-smoker, but I certainly enjoy a glass of wine, and with small children, young children, teenagers, that is not something that I want to condone with them. So I think that we have to have a good relationship where we're able to talk to our youngster about the fact that although there are some activities we engage in as adults, they are not activities appropriate for a youngster.

Kids today have a fund of information on the health issues. They have comprehensive health courses like they've never had before. They have all the information about the risks. What they

do not have is the maturity to make a good decision, because they're too influenced by, yes, role models, but primarily by peer pressure.

BERRY: So you're suggesting that your booklet from (unintelligible) could help.

DAVIDSON: I think that the booklet will help a great deal with parents, smoking parents and non-smoking parents, help them as they work with their youngsters in coping with peer pressure and certainly in saying no to tobacco and a lot of other things that we do not want our youngsters involved in.

LAURIA: I find it ironic that, for example, once again last -- actually last week, the AMA once again called for tobacco companies to stop, for example, sponsoring car races, a perfect example of what we're talking about.

The father or mother going to that car race certainly is entitled to buy a beer. That's within their realm as an adult, if that's what they want to do. They don't want their kids out drinking, but there's a distinction that needs to be made. They don't want their kids driving around at 210 miles an hour in a circle. That's inappropriate.

And the children are going to need to perceive that there are -- there is a time and a place for everything, and perhaps they should never exceed the speed limit. We all would hope that they wouldn't or drink before their time, or smoke, if at all, until they're old enough to make that decision for themselves.

That's why we make a differentiation because we, as manufacturers of an adult product, perceive that there's a legitimate market and there's an illegal market, and that children obviously are a market that the law says we can't have. That's what we're trying to jettison. And I think that we are responding to a lot of our critics by doing so. We are not trying to ignore the clamor that we're hearing from certain communities. We are trying to, the best of our abilities, to address that with sound programs that will work.

And the peer pressure program is something that isn't being tried in other quarters. And sometimes we are -- we hear criticism that, well, there's not enough information in our literature about health information. But that's the one thing that children from age three on have plenty of. They can't really get away from that.

BERRY: So your book on saying no, does it have any charts that show a lung blackened by cigarette smoke or..?

DAVIDSON: No. And it doesn't because, as Tom said, they

have this information and, quite honestly, they need more. The number of teens smoking in the '70s and '80s decreased.

Now, the last few years, we've reached a plateau. About 18, 19 percent of teenagers smoke. It isn't because they haven't had the information, because they have, not only from the schools, both public and private, but from the media, from health organizations, there's a fund of information out there. So there has to be some other reason why they continue to smoke. And we feel it's definitely because of peer pressure. We want to get that percentage down as low as possible.

BERRY: But it does sound a little bit like your effort does stop short of really criticizing, I mean, the product. And obviously, I mean, you get your money, you're paid by the tobacco industry, and it's the tobacco industry that's lodged this campaign. It just sounds like it stops a little bit short of really saying how bad cigarettes are, how bad smoking is and so forth.

LAURIA: It's impossible to see -- buy a pack of cigarettes or see an ad that doesn't have the counter-message provided by the Surgeon General through the government. I don't think there's a single person listening to this program that isn't aware of the risk factors associated with cigarette smoking in terms of the linkage to lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema and other serious problems. There's a universal awareness of that. What there isn't any universal awareness of is how to cope with the pressures that come to bear on children.

You're going to be -- you're not going to be very hard pressed to get health information about smoking. You can get it almost anywhere you look. You will be hard pressed to find good reliable tactics to address peer pressure.

In a way, you can look at this program as trying to fill in the gaps which will give you, as a parent or as a role model, more equipment than ever to address some of these issues.

DAVIDSON: And the booklet does say, several times, "Children should not smoke." It gives parents actual techniques to use helping them help their kids say no. It also helps improve communication within the family. So I really think that it's a very sincere effort by the Tobacco Institute.

The booklet, at this point in time, we've distributed well over 110,000 copies of this booklet. The two prior booklets that we did, we've distributed free of charge over 800,000 copies of those. The response that we've received back has been tremendous. And parents and grandparents and educators have said that, yes, it's effective, yes, it does work.

BERRY: Okay. But I'm -- you know, you say it says, "Children should not smoke." There's a big difference in children should not smoke or -- and saying, "If you smoke, that may make you die. Smoking can kill."

LAURIA: Well, if they've already heard that message from everything, from the "Cosby Show" to their science teacher, to all the campaigns and (unintelligible) more we pitched at them, we feel that the most effective tact to try and bring down smoking (unintelligible) around children is to give information to their parents on how they can really communicate better with their kids on smoking and other issues. But our literature, which is specifically addressed to smoking, as Jolly has mentioned, can be used for other adult activities as well.

But that's not -- there's the gap. There's where parents are not heretofore being given as much information as they need. We think that we're making a real contribution. And also, we've not paid much attention to the fact that in the states that have minimum ages for smoking. The industry has -- is providing an extensive campaign for retailers to stop the sales to minors.

BERRY: How?

LAURIA: With store signs and with clerks. Education materials for clerks on how to check for ID, how to deal with a disgruntled customer, explaining to them what the penalties are for that sale, raising the profile on stopping the cigarette sales in retail areas.

BERRY: Would you endorse, then, proposed laws that would ban cigarette vending machines and tobacco vending machines on the same premise that, you know, there's not going to be a policeman standing next to this tobacco machine checking IDs of people who drop their two dollars.

LAURIA: Well, in part, I would say we partially endorse some measures. We...

BERRY: What does that mean?

LAURIA: That eight out of ten machines are in areas where children can't get at them. Those machines need no attention. Whether they are in a tavern or a factory, industrial area, some office settings, those machines provide very little access. For the 20 percent or so of machines that the national surveys tell us have unlimited access for children, we have several measures that we have put forth in the terms of a lobbying position. We will lobby to restrict machines that give kids access.

BERRY: But not all machines.

LAURIA: No. Why would you pull one out of a tavern or a bar? Those cater strictly to adults. We're worried about the ones that are in a shopping mall or a bowling alley. Those machines need to either be equipped with electronic locking devices so that ID can be checked before a purchase is made, or a token system which -- the same principle, you go to a cash register, you buy a token after showing your ID. That's two ways to keep kids away from machines and not limit access to adults.

Failing that, the machines could can be relocated to areas of direct supervision. That can be awkward. And if push comes to shove in certain communities where they feel none of the above is effective, the industry would not oppose the removal of those publicly available machines, preserving the machines that are not publicly available. That separates the child aspect of the market from the total market.

BERRY: What about chewing tobacco? In this part of the country that's a very popular product, and there is a big problem of children and teenagers chewing tobacco which, of course, can also lead to another problem.

LAURIA: Well, as you know, the booklet is "Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No" and not "Cigarettes: Helping Youth Say No."

DAVIDSON: It addresses that, Melany, and you're absolutely right. And it's not only in this part of the country. It's widespread, the use of tobacco among young boys. And so the booklet, the techniques would work equally as well for a parent concerned about that.

LAURIA: I should add, as a representative of the tobacco lobby, that we have been successful this year in three states and the District of Columbia in lobbying to raise the minimum age for purchase.

In Virginia, in Vermont and in DC, we had minimum ages of 16 and we worked to raise it to the age of 18. And then in Wyoming -- I'll be going there next after Birmingham -- they had no minimum age for purchase. That -- they now have one of age 18. Now we were unsuccessful in Louisiana, but we'll be back, as we will in New Mexico and Missouri and other places.

BERRY: Okay. In those states, did you go in and propose this or did you propose 18 as an alternative to someone else who wanted it to be 21 or never?

LAURIA: No. That's supposing a layer of opposition that's

not there. We can't -- we don't -- no one can propose legislation except for elected legislators. We work with them. They propose it and we rally what forces we can muster to support -- go on public record of supporting it.

BERRY: We've talked mainly about, and that's what we've been scheduled to talk about, your efforts to discourage children and teens from smoking. As you see a tremendous value in discouraging youths from starting a smoking habit or a chewing tobacco habit, do you ever intend, as the tobacco industry, to discourage adults from buying your products because they are dangerous and can lead to death?

LAURIA: Then I think the people that buy the products are aware of the government's health concerns around it. I don't think that any direct action by the Tobacco Institute is necessary or appropriate. It is, after all, legal around the world. We have enormous overseas markets as well as a strong domestic market. It is shrinking about two to three percentage points a year.

We know how to operate in a declining market. Some of the advertising you see are merely brands that are trying to communicate information to smokers in an ever shrinking market and a smaller slice of the pie. That's why cigarette ads often are colorful. They need to get noticed amongst all of the clutter.

But it would be inappropriate, I think, for anyone to expect the tobacco industry to tell people who can legally buy their products and are well aware of the Surgeon General's concerns about smoking, that they shouldn't. What we are doing is following society's guidelines that dictate that people under 19, in this state, or 18 in most other states, should not be using your products and it's illegal for them to buy your products. We want -- we respect that and we will help hold the line as society dictates.

BERRY: We have just a few moments left. Jolly Ann, would you like to take a chance to sort of summarize what you're trying to achieve?

DAVIDSON: I'd love to, Melany. Thank you.

The booklet "Tobacco: Helping Youth Say No" is a guide for parents to use with their youngsters from elementary age on up, working with them to understand and cope with peer pressure, and giving them techniques to use in helping their youngsters say no to tobacco and a number of other activities that we, as parents, do not want our youngsters involved in.

For their free copy, your listeners may write to: The Tobacco Institute, Post Office Box 41130 in Washington, DC. And the zip code is 20018.

BERRY: Thank you both for joining us on the program.

LAURIA: It was a pleasure. Thank you for having us.

DAVIDSON: Thank you, Melany.

BERRY: Tom Lauria is a spokesman for the Tobacco Institute based in Washington. Jolly Ann Davidson is an educational consultant to that same group which is a wing of the tobacco industry in the United States. Thanks for being on Perspective.

LAURIA: Thank you.

DAVIDSON: Thank you.

BERRY: Thanks for joining us on the program. I'm Melany Berry.