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## Poll clears air on butt ban impact

By KATHLEEN HARRIS <mailto:kathleen.harris@ott.sunpub.com>, Ottawa Sun

OTTAWA RESIDENTS are celebrating the new smoke-free city by hitting the town more often, a new poll has found.

An Ottawa Sun poll conducted by Corporate Research Group shows 29.5% -- nearly one in three residents - are going out to bars and restaurants more often since the smoking ban was imposed. Another 16.9% report going out less often, while 53.3% say the bylaw hasn't impacted their social habits.

Only 0.2% didn't know or didn't respond to the question.

"This points out that those who are spending time, energy and money battling the bylaw should be spending time, energy and money on tapping into a huge market," said Kanata Coun. Alex Munter, who pushed hard for the ban.

### 'HUGE' NEW MARKET

Munter, who chairs the city's health and social services committee, said the survey results point to a "huge" new market of bar and restaurant patrons. Based on a city population of 800,000, Munter's math says establishment owners now have 200,000 new potential customers.

These survey results reflect the experience of other cities which have implemented anti-smoking laws, where business over the long-term has been either neutral or improved, Munter said.

**Brian Card, president of Corporate Research Group, called the results "a strong signal" mayor Bob Chiarelli and council took the right path by banning smoking.**

"It's only hurting a market niche of hard-core smokers. Everyone else is going out more often," he said.

But Duke of Somerset owner Edgar Mitchell, who is a member of PUBCO, the group fighting the bylaw, said the survey doesn't consider the vastly different demographics of restaurant and bar patrons. He predicts a poll of only bar-goers would yield reverse results.

"In my case, I have lost regular customers. It's hard to attract people who will make up for someone coming in four, five, six or even seven nights a week. The new people aren't necessarily people who come out regularly."

The poll also showed almost a quarter of city residents would register a complaint if they saw someone breaking the bylaw in public.

According to the poll, 71.1% would not complain, while 24.6% would be inclined to register a complaint. Another 4.1% didn't know or didn't answer, while 0.2% refused to respond.

Susan Jones, the city's director of bylaw enforcement services, said many citizens are taking enforcement into their own hands by directly approaching people who light up, resolving the problem themselves.

But, she says, because it is a health-driven policy that affects people more directly than other bylaws, more people are inclined to register a complaint.

The poll, conducted from Dec. 6-8, surveyed 484 randomly selected Ottawa residents. The results are considered to be accurate within +/- 4.46 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

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