

Aiming for a Tobacco Tax Increase in Louisiana

National Tobacco Control Conference
Washington, D.C.
December 2, 2014

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American Heart Association

Toll of Tobacco in Louisiana

- Current tax rate: \$0.36
- National rank: 49th
- Adults in Louisiana who smoke: 23.5%
- Adults who die each year from smoking: 7,200
- Annual healthcare costs caused by smoking: 1.89 billion

A Tale of 4 cents

2000

- \$0.20
- \$0.04
- June 30, 2002 = \$0.20

2002

- 8 cent increase = \$0.32
- \$0.04 extended to June 30, 2012

2011

- Passed both Houses of the legislature

4
comments

Gov. Bobby Jindal vetoes 4-cent renewal of tobacco tax

25

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By Jan Moller, The Times-Picayune
on June 13, 2011 at 8:05 PM, updated June 13, 2011 at 8:08 PM

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BATON ROUGE -- Gov. Bobby Jindal vetoed a proposed renewal of part of the state cigarette tax late Monday, setting up a rare showdown with the Legislature as the Senate and House attempt an override.



Jindal's decision to veto **House Bill 591** came as no surprise, as the governor and his staff had signaled it would come early in the week.

"I have made a commitment to the taxpayers of Louisiana to oppose all attempts to raise taxes," Jindal wrote in his veto message.



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Louisiana Constitution amendments on fall ballots include cigarette tax question

By Ed Anderson, The Times-Picayune on July 14, 2011 at 9:30 AM

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Louisiana lawmakers slacked off the pace of filing and passing changes to the state Constitution at their recently concluded annual session, approving just five of the 31 they introduced.



View full size Alex Brandon, The Associated Press archive

Four of the five proposals will be on the Oct. 22 ballot; the fifth will be on the Nov. 19 runoff ballot.

The number filed was substantially slimmed down from the 2010 session, when lawmakers proposed 87 constitutional changes and passed 10 on to voters. Eight of those 10 were approved by voters last fall as were two held over from 2009, when there was no statewide election.

"The good news this year is there are only five," said Barry Erwin, president of the Council for a Better Louisiana, a Baton Rouge-based issues-oriented research

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Why not 2015?

- Governor's veto promise
- Fall Elections
- New Governor

2017 or Bust!

- Coalition Building
- Data & Research
- Communications
- Grassroots Organizing

Coalition for Tobacco-Free Louisiana



The Rapides Foundation Service Area



Service Area Parishes

1. Allen
2. Avoyelles
3. Catahoula
4. Grant
5. LaSalle
6. Natchitoches
7. Rapides
8. Vernon
9. Winn

The Rapides Foundation

- Established in 1994
- Mission: The Foundation has a mission to improve the health status of residents in Central Louisiana.
- Priority Areas
 - Healthy People
 - Education
 - Healthy Communities

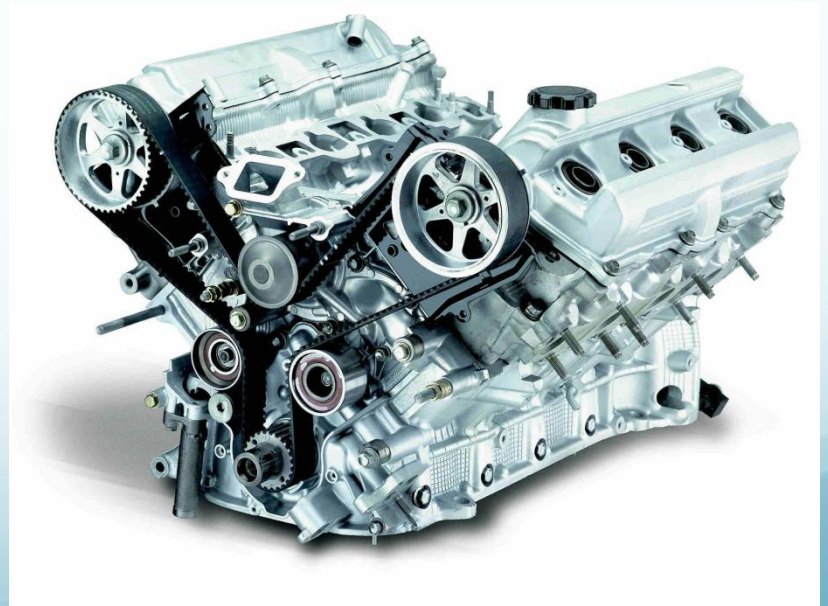


Lessons Learned

1. Know your roles
2. Know your funder
3. Find more funds

Steering Committee

- Develop strategy
- Hiring Staff
- Significant monetary decisions
- Policy decisions
- Issue experts



Supporting Organizations

- Influence / Credibility
- Examples:
 - Ochsner Health System
 - Louisiana State Medical Society
 - Louisiana Hospital Association
- Attractive



Stakeholder's meeting

- Whys?
 - Why raise the tax? (Health Reasons)
 - Why join our efforts?
- Hows?
 - How we plan to be successful?
 - How they can help?

Risk Ahead!

- Different Bottom Lines
 - Settle for a lower tax rate
 - Use bill as negotiation device
- Potential Solutions
 - Early engagement
 - Deal breaker document

Data & Research

1. Local Credibility
2. Economic Messengers
3. Support National Partner's Data



About Louisiana Budget Project

Provides independent, nonpartisan research and analysis of public policy issues and their impact on low- and moderate-income Louisiana families

Visit www.labudget.org



Louisiana Budget Project



- Testify in Legislative hearings
- Participate in statewide advocacy trainings
- Media
 - News interviews
 - Op Eds
- Engage networkers

Communications

Coalition

- Focus the debate on healthcare outcomes
- Shine a light on the detrimental impact tobacco has on the health of Louisiana residents
- Expose the nexus between a higher tobacco tax and better health

Communications

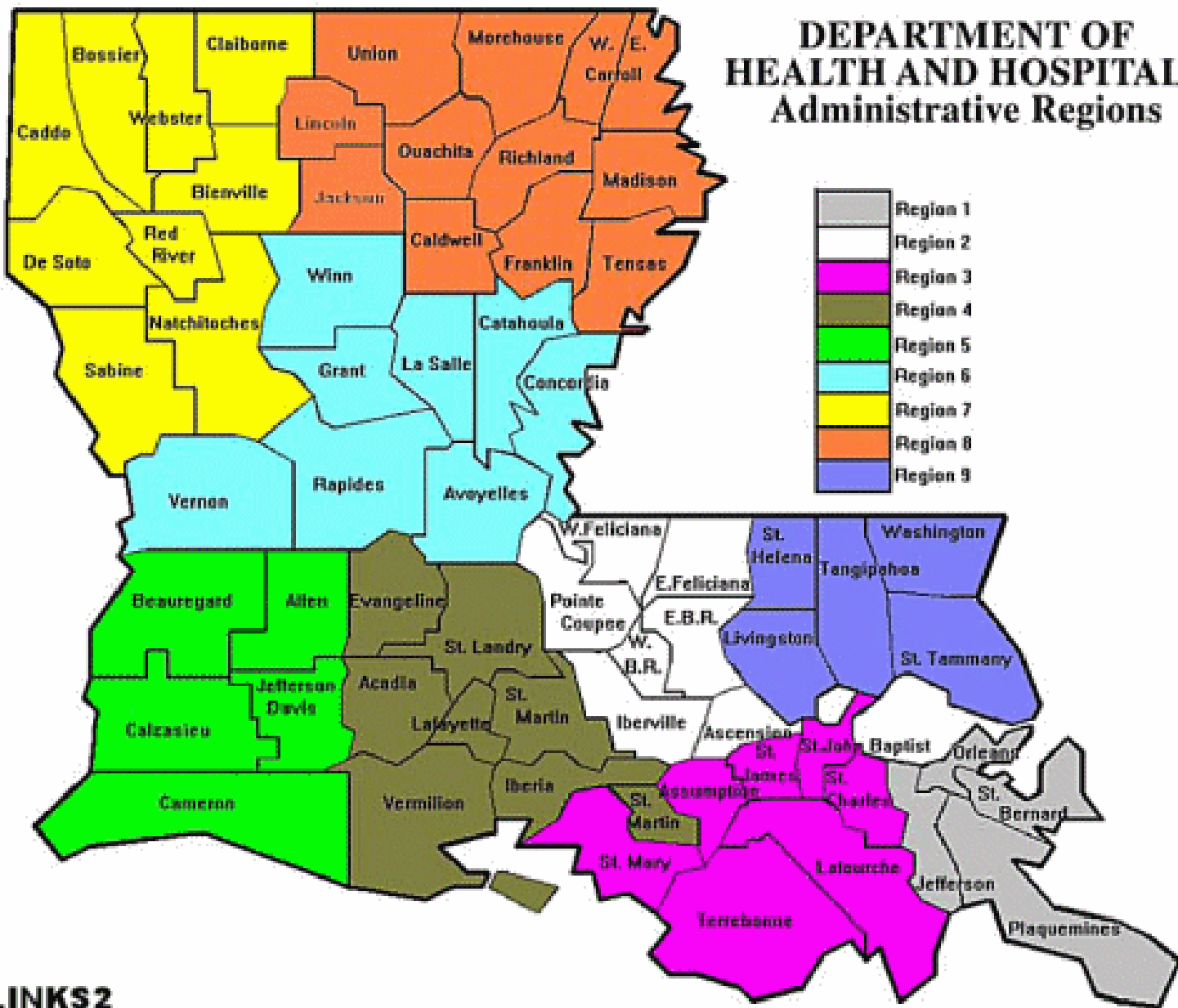
The Louisiana Budget Project

- Decreasing healthcare cost associated with smoking related illnesses
- Increasing the state's revenue

Grassroots Organizing

- “In a democracy there are only two types of power: there's organized people and organized money, and organized money only wins when people aren't organized.” *Benjamin Todd Jealous*

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HOSPITALS Administrative Regions



Grassroots Organizing

3 Major Grassroots Components:

1. Recruitment
2. Training
3. Action

Grassroots Organizing

1. **Recruit** organizations that have significant constituencies within their respective region
2. Lead advocacy **trainings** with the leadership of the organizations
3. Ready to **act**; testify in committee hearings and participate in media activities

Next Steps

- Hiring Staff
- Stakeholder's meeting
- NOLA Advocates

The End

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