Press Release

FY 2027

[Police Department/Sheriff's Office] to partner with Iowa Department of Revenue for Tobacco, Alternative Nicotine and Vapor Product Education and Enforcement.

[Community], Iowa ([Month ##], 20##) – The [Police Department/Sheriff's Office] has taken a pledge to keep tobacco, alternative nicotine and vapor products out of the hands of [Community] underage persons.

Known as I-PLEDGE, the program is a partnership with Iowa Department of Revenue to educate local retailers and to enforce Iowa's tobacco, alternative nicotine and vapor product laws. Since the program's inception in 2000, the statewide tobacco compliance rate has grown to exceed 90 percent. By participating in the program, the [Police Department/Sheriff's Office] has committed to do its part to increase the compliance rate even more this year.

I-PLEDGE places emphasis on retailer training. Clerks who successfully complete an online training course, then pass an exam, will become I-PLEDGE-certified. This allows a retail establishment to use an affirmative defense against a civil penalty, if the certified clerk makes an illegal sale.

"I-PLEDGE's retailer training is a great way for clerks to prepare themselves to refuse illegal tobacco, alternative nicotine and vapor product sales," [Chief/Sheriff Name] said. "The training also assists retailers to ensure they maintain a compliant and responsible establishment."

[Officers/Deputies] will also be conducting compliance checks on local establishments as part of the I-PLEDGE program. Underage customers, under the supervision of law enforcement officials, will enter establishments and attempt to buy tobacco, alternative nicotine and vapor products. Clerks who make the illegal sale will be cited on the spot.

Criminal penalties for selling tobacco, alternative nicotine and vapor products to a minor include a $135 fine for a first offense, a $325 fine for a second offense, and a $645 fine for third, and subsequent, offenses. However, handing out citations is not the intent of the I-PLEDGE program.

"By partnering with the Iowa Department of Revenue, we hope to educate clerks and maintain a compliant retail environment in our community," [Chief/Sheriff Name] said. "Moreover, we pledge to help keep tobacco, alternative nicotine and vapor products out of the hands of underage persons in Iowa."

To take the I-PLEDGE training, or search certification records, go to revenue.iowa.gov.

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