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TOBACCO-FREE LEE RECOGNIZES AZTEC PLUMBING & DRAINS TOBACCO FREE POLICY



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Fort Myers, Fla.—The Tobacco-Free Lee Coalition congratulates Aztec Plumbing & Drains on taking bold steps to protect the health of their staff and their customers, and for being ahead of many employers with progressive and innovative company tobacco free policies.

Cigarette smoking remains the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States, accounting for more than 480,000 deaths per year.¹ Smoking also impacts almost every system in the body, causing lung cancer, heart disease, stroke, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and even sudden infant death syndrome. Secondhand smoke exposure contributes to approximately 41,000 deaths among nonsmoking adults and 400 deaths in infants each year.¹

Chris Tedesco, General Manager with Aztec Plumbing & Drains said, “We recognized that the health and well-being of our employees was something very important for us to promote. We were already offering great benefits like paid health insurance for employees, a 401K program and ongoing skills training. It dawned on us that we had many employees that used tobacco products, so we decided to put together a No Tobacco policy that gradually eased tobacco users into this philosophy. We teamed up with the American Lung Association and Tobacco Free Lee in providing an employee tobacco cessation class that lasted six weeks.”

Aztec paid for their employee’s time to attend the class which was brought to their office on a weekly basis free of charge. According to Mr. Tedesco, “We knew that if we could get our employees to quit tobacco use, their health would obviously benefit, and we would benefit from a healthier work force.”

Their tobacco-free policy has become a part of their image and how they promote their employees as people you will gladly welcome into your home.

Tedesco said, “We also felt that our customers would truly appreciate technicians who were tobacco free, not bringing odors into their homes and contaminating them with third hand smoke. And as part of the hiring interview, we are upfront with all candidates on our tobacco-free policy so that everyone hired is willingly participating.” Our website now states, “We’re clean, tobacco-free and in uniform.”

“This change was difficult for some employees and we have offered additional cessation classes as time has gone by. We are proud of our employees and our ongoing commitment to promoting their health and promoting the idea of a No Tobacco policy as a business practice. For us it’s been a win win!!” Tedesco said.

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1. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The Health Consequences of Smoking—50 Years of Progress: A Report of the Surgeon General. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, Office on Smoking and Health, 2014 [accessed 2019 Jan 30]