

# SOUTHWEST DAILY NEWS

## • Council passes ban on tobacco products, e-cigarettes in public establishments

- An ordinance enacting a citywide smoking ban on tobacco products and electronic cigarettes in bars, gaming facilities and other public establishments passed at the Monday, April 13 meeting of the Sulphur City Council.



- Heather Regan WhiteGrammy-award winning musician Chubby Carrier spoke in favor of the an ordinance banning smoking in bars and other public establishments at the Sulphur City Council meeting Monday, April 13. Carrier said he lost his father to lung cancer and fears for his own health if he continues to perform in "hazardous environments" like smoky bars.

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- **Heather Regan-White**

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An ordinance enacting a citywide smoking ban on tobacco products and electronic cigarettes in bars, gaming facilities and other public establishments passed at the Monday, April 13 meeting of the Sulphur City Council.

Ron Burdick, owner of a local e-cigarette business, said that banning vaping (the use of electronic vaporizing devices) when there is no decisive literature proving it's harmful was in effect finding vaping guilty before it being proven so.

Councilman Randy Favre said that after spending hours poring over hundreds of studies from the United States and abroad he found no evidence that suggests conclusively that it's absolutely harmless. "And they're not regulated, so you just don't know what is in them," he said. Favre said that if any upcoming studies conclusively prove that it's harmless, the ordinance can be revisited and revised.

Burdick requested that electronic smoking devices and tobacco smoking be considered by the council as two separate ordinances so that e-cigarette users will have their own designated smoking areas.

He said he was concerned about those who have been able to quit smoking cigarettes with e-devices having to smoke in the same location as tobacco smokers.

"It's the federal government who put y'all in this category," answered Favre.

Grammy-award-winning musician Chubby Carrier and Alexandria City Councilman Roosevelt Johnson both spoke in favor of the ordinance. Carrier said he has been playing in "hazardous environments" like smoky bars and casinos most of his life and he is concerned about the long-term effects it is having on his health. He said his father, also a musician, smoked and died of lung cancer. "We're losing one musician a year to lung cancer," Carrier said.

Johnson told the Council that Alexandria had passed a similar ordinance and Sulphur need not worry about the economic effects passage may cause. "What happened to the bars and casinos? No, they didn't go out of business. The Bingo halls are still open," he confirmed.

Another speaker in support of the ordinance was Family Physician Jason Fuqua, M.D. "All research and studies I've seen show that cigarette smoke causes cancer and heart disease," he said.

Fuqua said five million people die annually in the United States from smoking-related illnesses and all are considered pre-mature deaths. He said that the death toll is projected to top eight million by 2030.

The ordinance, which in addition to banning smoking inside bars, Bingo halls, gaming facilities and other public places, establishes that there must be 25 feet from the front entrance of an establishment and the designated smoking area and that there must be five feet between any other entrances and the designated smoking area.