

Seven of 10 refused tobacco sale

The Cherokee Nation Regional Prevention Coordinator (RPC), in partnership with Sallisaw NOW Coalition/Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) conducted Reward Reminder Visits (RRV's) on Sept. 18 in Sallisaw.

RRV's are a preventive and successful strategy to reduce youth access to tobacco by rewarding tobacco retailers who ID properly and refuse sale. RRV's are an opportunity to educate county tobacco retailers about the risks and potential negative impact tobacco sales have on our youth in the community.

Regardless of whether ID is checked or not, if a clerk puts tobacco in front of the youth and/or rings up a price on the register, it is counted as a sale. It is the clerk's responsibility to properly check ID and refuse sale.

Of the 10 retailers visited, there were three attempted sales of tobacco to a minor decoy. Two of the three clerks who sold did not ask to see identification.

One clerk who sold without asking for ID told RPC staff, "I am glad you all are doing this. I get ID'd all the time and I am 28 years old."

When asked why then she decided to sell without verifying the decoy's age she said she did the math wrong in her head.

Because youth are told to present their real ID, which shows that they are underage, the clerk only has to read the yellow box on the vertical ID next time. This yellow box tells the clerk the exact day month and year a customer will turn 18.

Each retailer, reminded to follow the law, received a packet of educational information to help staff members make better choices. RPC 5 will follow up within 20 days with all businesses who sold to minors to offer additional merchant education.

The retailers who denied sale of tobacco to a minor were: Lucky Mart, Dollar General No. 1870, Murphy USA, EZ-Mart No. 338, Walmart Supercenter, Sallisaw Travel Center and Quick Stop.