



## **P R E S S R E L E A S E**

**News Media Contact:**

Michele Mickiewicz  
Public Information Officer  
(805) 681-5446  
(805) 451-3497 (cell)  
[mmickie@sbcphd.org](mailto:mmickie@sbcphd.org)

September 9, 2008  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Dawn Dunn  
(805) 681-5407

### **Progress Stopping Sales of Tobacco to Minors**

Santa Barbara County, September 2008— Officials at the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department are releasing the results of the annual undercover “tobacco buy” operations. These results indicate sales to minors are down from last year in Goleta and the unincorporated areas of the County and that no sales to minors occurred from undercover buys in Lompoc or Solvang.

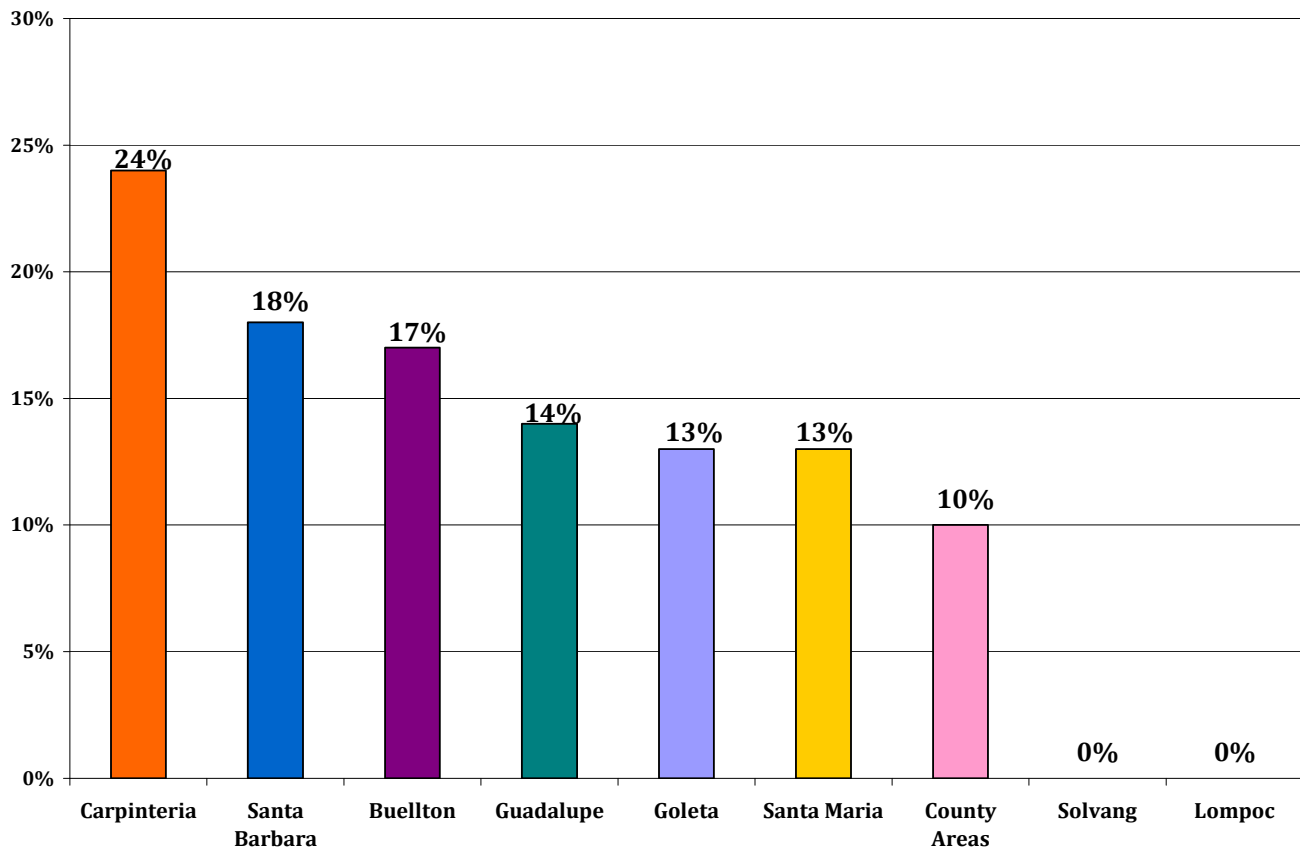
The Public Health Department collaborates with the Santa Barbara County Sheriff’s Department to conduct annual undercover buys in which youth, ages 15 or 16 years of age, act as undercover operatives and try to purchase tobacco products. Results from the recent buys show the unincorporated area’s rates are down from 15% last year to 10% this year. The City of Goleta also saw a decrease from 19% last year to 13% this year. The City of Santa Barbara had an 18% rate this year, up slightly from last year’s rate of 16%.

Tobacco licensing laws currently exist in the cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta and in the unincorporated areas of the county. Licensing laws require businesses that sell tobacco products to obtain an annual permit and abide by all tobacco related laws, especially those concerning sales to minors. Failure to comply with the law results in a gradual series of penalties with the potential for license suspension. Public Health and Sheriff Department officials were pleased with these results and attribute them to the licensing laws and consistent enforcement over time.

Undercover buys were also conducted in the cities of Carpinteria, resulting in a 24% illegal sales rate, Buellton with a 17% illegal sales rate, Guadalupe rates were 14%, with Santa Maria at 13%.

None of the tobacco retailers in the cities of Solvang and Lompoc sold tobacco products to the teen decoy during the annual checks. Comparison data is not available for these cities, since they have not been “shopped” in recent years, with the exception of Lompoc, whose sales rate was 0% last year. In each of the communities 84% to 100% of all tobacco retail outlets were shopped, with the exception of the City of Santa Barbara, where 33% of the stores were visited.

### 2008 Sales of Tobacco to Minors - Santa Barbara County



Sales of tobacco products to minors are monitored through routine unannounced enforcement operations. As a result of these local buys, five merchants face a potential 30-day suspension of the license. Details regarding specific stores that will be required to stop selling tobacco products will be released separately, pending the outcome of appeal hearings. Anyone with questions regarding the enforcement of tobacco sales to minors is encouraged to contact the Tobacco Prevention Settlement Program at 805-681-5407 or via email at [tobacco@sbcpd.org](mailto:tobacco@sbcpd.org).