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# Press Release

**January 06, 2012:**

**Clayton, Iowa January 2012** – The Clayton County Sheriff’s Office has taken a pledge to keep tobacco out of the hands of Clayton County youth.

It’s called the Iowa Pledge, and it’s a partnership with the Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division (Iowa ABD) to educate local retailers and to enforce Iowa’s tobacco laws. The Iowa Pledge Program has helped increase statewide tobacco compliance to a rate of 93% since it began in 2000. By partnering with the Iowa ABD, the Clayton County Sheriff’s Office will look to do its part in continuing the upward trend.

Clerks who successfully complete an online training program and pass an exam will be Iowa Pledge Certified and the retail establishment will receive an affirmative defense against a civil penalty if the certified clerk makes an illegal sale. Go to the following website: [www.abd.com](http://www.abd.com) “The Iowa Pledge Retailer Certification” classes are a great way for clerks to prepare themselves to refuse illegal tobacco sales,” Sheriff Tschirgi said. “The classes will help retailers maintain a compliant and responsible establishment.”

Also as a part of the Iowa Pledge Program, a deputy will be conducting compliance checks on local establishments. Underage customers under the supervision of law enforcement officers will enter establishments and attempt to buy tobacco products. Clerks who make the illegal sale will be cited on the spot.

Criminal penalties for selling tobacco to a minor include a \$100 fine for the first offense, a \$250 fine for the second offense and a \$500 fine for third and subsequent offenses. Handing out citations, however, is not the intent of the Iowa Pledge Program.

“By partnering with the Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division, we hope to educate clerks and maintain a compliant retail environment in our community,” Sheriff Tschirgi said. “Moreover, we pledge to help keep tobacco out of the hands of Iowa’s youth.”