

Montebello Police Department
"Dedicated to Superior Service"
G. Couso-Vasquez – Chief of Police



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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***MONTABELLO POLICE DEPARTMENT
ENFORCES ILLEGAL TOBACCO SALES TO MINORS***

Montebello, Calif., January 20, 2002 -- In an effort to alleviate the devastating effects of smoking and comply with the law, the Montebello Police Department (MPD) implemented a comprehensive program enforcing tobacco control laws in the city with help from an enforcement grant from the Department of Health Services, Tobacco Control Section.

On June 19, 2002, officers from the Crime Impact Unit in conjunction with the Tobacco Enforcement Program conducted a youth decoy operation. A total of thirty-four (34) locations were visited. Minors ages 14 – 16 were illegally sold cigarettes by six of thirty-four (34) merchants visited on Wednesday. The sale of tobacco products to a minor (under 18) is a misdemeanor, which carries a penalty up to a \$1,000 fine, depending on prior offenses.

Corporal Gordon explains: "To help prevent the on-going problem of illegal sales of tobacco to children, we have implemented a youth decoy program designed to identify and prosecute merchants who sell tobacco products to minors. The decoy program involves the police department's use of a minor obviously under the age of 18. The minor is sent into a location and attempts to purchase a tobacco product, while a police officer poses as a customer. The goal of our program is to decrease the sale of tobacco products to the youth in our community."

(more)

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For more information on illegal sales of tobacco products to minors or to report a violation, contact the Montebello Police Department at (323) 887-1341.

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