

Tobacco companies target blacks - WVVA TV Bluefield Beckley WV News, Weather and Sports

Posted: Jan 15, 2009 5:42 PM EST



Every day the tobacco industry loses around 4200 smokers who have either quit the habit or have died from smoking related illness.

To replace lost smokers and gain new customers, tobacco companies target the youth, and the majority of their marketing is done in African American communities. A special training called "Follow The Signs" was held Thursday in Bluefield to help raise awareness of "Big Tobacco's" marketing tactics.

The training was hosted by a tobacco industry insider who left the business after learning the strategies companies use to attract new black smokers.

"I was not aware of how they targeted, I was not aware of how they target specific communities and when I finally realized "Oh my god", they are placing advertising near candy and toys. They have little free gifts that appeal to youth. They have brand websites that have games that appeal to youths. I couldn't do it anymore," says La Tanisha Wright of the National African American Tobacco Prevention Network.

The tobacco industry spends 12.4 billion dollars a year on cigarette ads.



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