



July 20, 2009

On business: Hefty hit awaits smokers

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Smoking can be a tough habit.

Tough on health, tough on the image and tough on the wallet. And for smokers in Michigan, there is a good chance it's going to get tougher.

Those of you who do smoke likely have noticed the recent upswing in cigarette prices as a result of a U.S. Department of Treasury decision to increase the tax on a pack of cigarettes from 39 cents to \$1.01. Those who thought they could escape the tax by rolling their own were in for another surprise: The tax increase also extends to cigars, chewing, and loose tobacco, and even snuff tobacco.

In Michigan, the taxes could be heftier. One proposal under consideration would double the state tax on all tobacco products from 32 percent to 64 percent, though that plan has not been passed by state lawmakers.

Folks who roll their cigarettes get hit the hardest. With the combined effect of the new federal tax and the potentially inflated state tax, rollers will pay \$70 for a bag of unrolled tobacco where only a month or two before they had been paying \$20.

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