



VISALIA POLICE DEPARTMENT

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*****NEWS RELEASE*****

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DOJ Grant Helps VPD Officers Crack Down on Tobacco Sales to Minors.

This week, Visalia Police Department Officers conducted a tobacco minor decoy operation to check if businesses in the City of Visalia sold tobacco products to minors. Under the supervision of officers, the minor decoys were told to go into businesses around the city and attempt to purchase tobacco products. Three businesses were cited for selling tobacco to a minor.

The Visalia Police Department, in partnership with the California State Department of Justice, is committed to protecting children by preventing tobacco and nicotine addiction. Smoking remains the leading cause of preventable death, killing over 480 thousand people in the United States annually. Nearly nine in ten daily smokers start smoking before the age of 18.

In an effort to combat underage smoking, the Visalia Police Department will be holding a series of tobacco decoy and compliance inspections throughout the year to ensure businesses are complying with state law. A retailer who is found guilty can be charged for a misdemeanor or subject to a fine up to \$1,000.

Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California State Department of Justice.

