

Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

"Volk Packaging: A Long Standing Community Partner Now Leading the Way in Tobacco Prevention"

The COVID-19 global pandemic has everyone concerned, but for those who smoke or vape tobacco products, it may be especially concerning. Although there is not a direct correlation, tobacco users are at a higher risk for severe illness due to increased respiratory distress. Currently, in the United States, more than 34 million Americans use tobacco products, and there is conclusive evidence that smoking is a major cause of a multitude of chronic health conditions, including cancer, infectious disease, and respiratory decline .

Given the current situation, there is no better time than now for smokers to avoid using all tobacco products in order to protect their health. It is also the time for community members to protect non-smokers, by helping to create a social norm for youth that stresses the harmful effects of tobacco use, and the importance of eliminating second and third hand smoke exposure in the environment. **Volk Packaging Corporation**, a 3rd generation box manufacturer in Southern Maine for 53 years, understands this commitment.



Derek Volk, owner Volk Packaging Corporation

Recently, despite a global pandemic, **Volk Packaging** joined with Partners for Healthier Communities to create a smoke free policy for all of their properties in the community of Biddeford, Maine. This policy promotes a healthier community, and most importantly is dedicated to providing a healthy and productive work environment for all employed at **Volk Packaging**.

"Fire and paper are not a good mix and it makes a lot of sense to have a smoking policy!"

-Derek Volk

Following U.S. CDC guidance on best practice interventions for tobacco control, **Volk Packaging** has made a commitment to improve health and prevent disease in their community by promoting smoking cessation, and preventing the initiation of tobacco use. Where one business leads, there is hope for many to follow. At **Volk Packaging**, they take their role as a corporate citizen very seriously, and have donated over \$100,000 to local charities each year.

They have also created a Hero's Wall honoring military men and women past and present with engraved tiles, which is open to the public at the front of their building. The Hero's Wall is a beautiful asset to the community, and has generated over \$25,000 in proceeds which Volk has donated to the Biddeford, Saco, and Old Orchard VFW Post 7997.

Volk Packaging has always had a strong connection and commitment to the community in Biddeford, Maine. In 2011, they were ranked #1 among manufactures in Maine Best Places to Work, and when needed most their dedication to their employees remains as strong today as it always has been. In addition to many honorable and admirable aspects of the company, **Volk Packaging** is now leading the way in creating smoke free areas for their employees and public to enjoy while inspiring other corporations to follow their lead.

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