

# PBHS students hear about smoking danger

By Judy Normand

OF THE COMMERCIAL STAFF

They'd heard it all before, but Pine Bluff High School students seemed willing enough Wednesday to hear the story again and listened attentively as Dr. Victor DeNoble recalled his role in investigations that eventually led to the multibillion dollar "tobacco settlement."

After congressional hearings, DeNoble was released from a long-standing secrecy agreement with his former employer, the Philip Morris tobacco company, and in 1994 was finally able to travel the country recounting his compelling story and passing along some sobering information about addiction and tobacco-related illnesses. His appearance was sponsored locally by the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Arkansas and the Jefferson County Tobacco-Free Coalition and was the second time the experimental psychologist had spoken to Pine Bluff students.

DeNoble told approximately 200 students that the average age for new smokers was around 13 and that addiction could occur in as little as six months, smoking only five cigarettes a day. He said also that "social smokers" — those smoking only occasionally — accounted for only one in 100.

"And it takes 30 hours for your lungs to get rid of the nicotine from one cigarette," he said. DeNoble added, in response to a question from one of the students, that there was no such thing as a "light" cigarette.

"The only difference is a little fresh air through the filter," DeNoble said, and revealed tobacco companies make the filters out of a sponge material with water-activated glue which, when wet from saliva, effectively closed any "fresh air" holes in the filter.

"The bottom line is that nicotine is controlling your brain function — it's changing your brain," DeNoble continued, "and if you're not addicted now, you will be if you're smoking at all."

James Horton is a counselor at Pine Bluff High School and acknowledged the fact that DeNoble held the attention of his audience — some of them smokers.

"But these kids have been well-educated about the evils of smoking from the beginning — since elementary school — with all the different programs available through the Pine Bluff schools. And knowledge is a great preventative," Horton said. He estimates around 10-15 percent of the students on campus smoke on some level — whether a puff or a pack a day.

"Some people may think there's more," Horton said, "but as a counselor, I come in close contact with many of our students and I'm usually able to detect if they've been smoking. There's not that many," he said, in response to an estimate of 40 percent from another faculty member.

Statistics from the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Arkansas show there are 11,000 new smokers each year in Arkansas under the age of 18 and, statewide, 43 percent of high school students are smokers — a situation blamed on peer pressure and marketing efforts by the tobacco companies. One-third of more than one million kids who begin smoking each year nationwide will die from tobacco-related illnesses, according to the coalition.

Linda Cullers is program director for the American Lung Association of Arkansas and was on the PBHS campus Wednesday to relay information about programs available through her organization.

"We have an Alternative to Suspension awareness program for students who break the rules or ignore school policy on smoking," Cullers said. The association also conducts cessation programs for teen-agers, regional meetings, youth summits and workshops, and several advocacy programs for youth, she said.

According to the Coalition for a Tobacco-Free Arkansas, a well-funded plan to prevent the use of tobacco must include the following components: community-based programs; counter marketing; treatment of tobacco addiction; public education; school-based programs; enforcement; and monitoring and evaluation.

## ALZHEIMER

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Martin said he knows some members of the council are upset that the meeting did not take place but said the

Little Rock police said McClinton tried to get into his wife's home at about 4 a.m. Saturday and was told to leave.

## REDFIELD

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At the time of his resignation, Johnson said that he still wanted to supervise the water department.

"I'll still be with the water department, and with the new (water tower) project coming up. I'll keep pretty busy," he said.

The city council had been considering its procedure for replacing Johnson as mayor. A special election was seen by some as the most reasonable choice but officials were told it would cost the city approximately \$5,000 to hold the election.

The council could have appointed someone to the position or asked City Recorder/Treasurer Julie Finley fill in as interim mayor.

Taylor Eubank, coordinator of the Jefferson County Election Commission, said the council could have appointed anyone they chose. The only requirement for the appointment was that the person be a registered voter of Redfield, Eubank said.

Under regulations set by Arkansas Municipal League, the position had to be formally declared as vacant before an appointment could be consid-

## CENTER

(Continued from Page One)

average person doesn't understand the significance. The other accredited museums are at Jonesboro, Rogers and four at Little Rock, she said.

A tremendous amount of credit goes to Mary Brock, the executive director, and her staff, but "Mary takes the heat for everything because a leader pushes everybody to get the job done and takes the heat."

Brock was quick to give credit to Brooks and the endowment board without whose vision this would never have happened. She also recognized Mac Bellingrath, chairman of the center's building committee; Adam Robinson Jr. and George Makris Jr., who headed the fund-raising committee; Nelson, who

designed the building; er, who was the build accomplishment," Brock

In 1997 when she was told that accreditation and "Gen. (William T.) that." Seawell was the board of trustees at the tenure, the center applied into the process.

The center will never again, but it must be 2009. They did the self Harbuck was the chairman; and this year occurred when Clemer man.

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