



#### **For Immediate Release**

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### **Governor Beshear Designates September 2015 “We Card Awareness Month”**

September 2, 2015 - Kentucky Governor Steve Beshear has designated September 2015 as “We Card Awareness Month,” encouraging retailers to continue in their efforts to prevent youth access to age-restricted products. “We Card Awareness Month” also commemorates the 20th anniversary of the launch of the national We Card program, focused on helping retailers through training and education.

In 1995, those underage could more easily buy tobacco at retail stores with some reports indicating a 40-60% success rate. Today, after years of efforts to prevent underage tobacco sales, that number is down to roughly 10% according to the federal government’s published 2013 Synar Report measuring illegal tobacco sales to minors. In Kentucky, the retail violation rate was 5.6%.

“Training sales associates to properly handle age-restricted products is a top priority for Kentucky retailers,” said Brian Clark, Executive Director of the Kentucky Petroleum Marketers Association. “The We Card program has been a big help in those efforts, providing ongoing training and education that helps retail employees prepare for challenging situations at the sales counter.”

“Kentucky retailers are doing an excellent job of identifying and rejecting illegal sales,” said Ted Mason, Executive Director of the Kentucky Grocers Association and Kentucky Association of Convenience Stores. “But we can always do more to stay on top of changes in the laws and to make sure all retail employees have the tools and training they need to successfully respond to difficult situations at the retail sales counter.”

“We Card Awareness Month” seeks to boost responsible retailing awareness along with the availability of 2016 We Card materials. From Labor Day to New Year’s Eve, retailers prepare for the coming year by ordering We Card in-store materials and lining up their employees for We Card’s online training courses.

To keep up with the times, We Card has launched many things in its 20th year, including:

- A new smartphone site, We Card NOW (<http://www.wecardnow.com>), providing retail management and employees with quick access to its resources, including an Age Calculator and digital version of its 365-page a day calendar that store cashiers use to “card” customers.
- New resources to help merchants of e-vapor products identify and deny minors’ attempts to purchase, such as:
  - New “Under 18, No E-Vapor: WE CARD” in-store signage

- A new in-store e-Vapor kit of resources that is especially suited for “vape” stores who are new to the concept of handling age-restricted product sales.
- An “E-Cig and Vapor Central” dedicated home on [wecard.org](http://wecard.org) where resources can be quickly found, ordered and used.

Preventing e-vapor sales to minors is especially important since over the past few years nearly all states have quickly adjusted their state laws to include e-cigarettes and vaping products within their tobacco or age-restricted product sales laws. At the federal level, the FDA has proposed “deeming” e-vapor products under its authority, and “carding” and denying sales to minors will be added as another retailer requirement.

The Food and Drug Administration has completed more than 461,000 retailer compliance checks since 2010—at a rate of approximately 100,000 in recent years. FDA has issued official guidance for Tobacco Retailer Training Programs and We Card’s elearning training not only matches this federal curriculum but exceeds it with retail-focused emphasis on customer service, role-playing and interactive gaming – earning the training an American Business Awards 2013 Bronze Stevie® Award as a Best Training Site.

“We Card was a pioneering program in 1995 to help introduce the concept of responsible retailing on a massive scale and ‘carding’ was a sometimes used term. Today, carding is commonplace and We Card is forging new resources for all age-restricted products, including those designed to prevent e-vapor product sales to minors,” said Lyle Beckwith, Senior Vice President of Government Relations for the National Association of Convenience Stores and a We Card board member.

“We have many key stakeholders to thank for the tremendous 20-year track record We Card has in training and educating retailers,” said Doug Anderson, President of We Card, “and vital to our efforts is the role the Kentucky Grocers Association, Kentucky Association of Convenience Stores and the Kentucky Petroleum Marketers Association play in keeping us in tune with retailers’ needs and changes in the state law’s requirements.”

***About the Kentucky Petroleum Marketers Association (KPMA):***

*The KPMA represents more than 155 members companies. Our marketer members own or supply over 3,000 retail fueling facilities (convenience stores, service stations, truckstops, cardlocks and marinas) in Kentucky. The association keeps its members up to date on petroleum-related news and information, pertinent developments in state and national government, and issues and trends that affect petroleum marketing and the industry.*

***About the Kentucky Grocers Association & Kentucky Association of Convenience Stores (KGA/KACS):***

*Founded in 1941, the Kentucky Grocers Association and Kentucky Association of Convenience Stores is a joint statewide trade association representing approximately 350 member companies operating in a retail food and convenience marketplace of 3,300 locations across Kentucky. Membership includes retailers, wholesalers, distributors, and related suppliers to the grocery, supermarket, and convenience store industries.*

***About We Card:*** *The We Card Program, Inc. is a national non-profit organization that represents a unified effort among trade associations, retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers. It was created 20 years ago to support retailers of tobacco and other age-restricted products. Individual retail establishments as well as large retail chains use We Card's educational and training services to comply with federal and state laws while working to prevent underage tobacco, e-vapor and other age-restricted product sales. National and state retail trade associations, government officials, community groups and others also support We Card's ongoing efforts to educate and train retailers.*

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