

Florida's Surgeon General and Lung Association Commend Disney Resort Hotels for Going Smoke-Free

ORLANDO, Fla. – Aug. 23, 2007. Florida Surgeon General Ana Viamonte Ros, M.D. and the American Lung Association of Florida recognized Walt Disney World Resorts' decision to make their 24,000 hotel rooms smokefree today at a ceremony at Disney's Boardwalk Resort. This decision will reduce harmful exposure to secondhand smoke for both employees and guest.

"As the largest single-site employer in Florida, this demonstrates how much we are able to do when we put our minds and hearts into it," said Erin Wallace, senior vice president of operations who accepted the award for Walt Disney World Resorts. "We have the potential to make a powerful and focused impression every year on millions of guests from around the world, and in particular, children."

As the largest single resort complex to institute this type of smoking policy change, the decision will ban smoking from each of Disney's 22 resorts, including all guest rooms, patios and balconies. The American Lung Association of Florida has been a tireless advocate for comprehensive smokefree workplace laws and views Disney's decision as setting a precedent for other Florida businesses.

"There is no reason for anyone to have to breathe in the toxins of secondhand smoke to earn a paycheck, or as a consequence of patronizing a company," says Dr. Paul Wilkens, president of the American Lung Association of Florida. "It is our hope more Florida businesses will follow Disney's great example and support healthy initiatives by providing a smokefree environment."

In November of 2002, Florida voters amended Article X, Section 20, of the Florida Constitution by barring tobacco smoke in most enclosed indoor workplace, but some exceptions still remain. A U.S. Surgeon General report confirms that secondhand smoke is a serious health hazard and even brief exposure can cause immediate harm. Nonsmokers exposed to secondhand smoke at work are at increased risk for adverse health effects. The effects of secondhand smoke can aggravate symptoms in the at least 400,000 children with asthma. Tobacco smoke is a common environmental asthma trigger that can be found in a variety of public places, including hotel rooms.