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Conway looks to limit smoking

Officials check on ban's potential for public places

By Tonya Root
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Conway could join a host of other towns and counties in the state that ban smoking in public places such as restaurants and bars if a proposal from Councilman Tom Anderson is approved.

Anderson, who has family members who suffer from breathing problems, said he would support a measure to stop residents and visitors from smoking in public areas.

"It's a health concern. Fewer people smoke than don't. To me it's not different than if someone didn't bathe or shower," Anderson said. "I think we'll have better response not to allow it in businesses and restaurants."

The Surfside Beach Town Council members also will address the issue at their meeting Monday, officials there said.

Smoking bans became a hot topic about 18 months ago and up to 15 governments in the state have passed ordinances to prevent public smoking, said Howard Duvall, executive director of the Municipal Association of South Carolina.

But most towns, cities and counties are awaiting a decision from the state Supreme Court as to whether they have the authority to pass such ordinances.

In Conway, city officials are researching the issue and plan to make a presentation to City Council for their direction, Conway's City Administrator Bill Graham said.

"We will be providing some information to council in regard to that. Some other municipalities have developed campaigns, voluntary programs among private establishments to not allow smoking in their establishments," Graham said.

"City Council will decide what approach will be best in Conway. We plan to provide information of what's going on around the state and discuss the advantages and disadvantages."

Councilman Irby Koon, who smoked for 35 years before quitting five years ago, said he would like to hear feedback on the issue.

"I'm in favor of doing away with it even as a former smoker," Koon said.

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