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**MAYOR EMANUEL ANNOUNCES STRATEGY FOR CONTINUED CRACKDOWN ON ILLEGAL
CIGARETTE SALES**

Expanded Efforts Will Build Upon Success of Previous Two Years

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection (BACP) announced today its 2014 strategy for maintaining momentum in its ongoing crackdown on illegal tobacco sales. To ensure that additional resources are available to address problem businesses, BACP will increase the size of its special enforcement unit by 50 percent and focus its efforts on tobacco enforcement in the coming year. This approach builds upon the City's success at expanding tobacco enforcement operations, increasing penalties for the sale of illegal cigarettes, and strengthening the City's partnership with the County.

"Since taking office, my administration has expanded its efforts to stamp out illegal tobacco sales because they harm our communities and our small businesses," said Mayor Rahm Emanuel. "These new initiatives will ensure that we continue to crack down on this illegal activity across the city."

The City will improve its efforts to crack down by expanding BACP's special enforcement unit, which conducts consumer protection sting operations against problem businesses, by 50 percent by increasing the size of the unit from 4 to 6 investigators. BACP will focus this unit on tobacco enforcement in the coming year. Earlier this year, this unit conducted successful sting operations against unscrupulous tax preparers that took advantage of customers seeking refunds and immigration service providers that prey on prospective citizens. This unit will also continue to work closely with the Chicago Police Department (CPD) to investigate and pursue the sale of loose and unstamped cigarettes in our neighborhood.

"Last year CPD increased arrests and nearly doubled the number of tickets given for selling loose cigarettes. Next year we plan to increase our efforts even further by automating alerts of illegal activity from BACP inspectors to our officers," said Chief Nicholas J. Roti, head of CPD's Bureau of Organized Crime, "We understand the impact of this crime on health and neighborhood economies, and we take it seriously."

These new initiatives are consistent with the Emanuel administration's success at cracking down on illegal cigarette sales. In 2012, BACP inspectors confiscated more than 31,000 packs of illegal cigarettes, a 50 percent increase from 2011. Similarly, CPD's enforcement efforts have grown as well, resulting in 781 arrests and 490 citations for the sale of loose cigarettes – an increase from 2012 when CPD made 734 arrests and 274 citations.

The City's enforcement efforts have also been aided by the increased penalties contained in the Emanuel Administration's May 2012 licensing reform ordinance, including a doubling of fines for selling tobacco to minors and adopting the more stringent County fines for the sale of unstamped cigarettes and single cigarettes. These penalty enhancements provided City inspectors with additional tools for cracking down on illegal tobacco activity.

Finally, as part of the City County collaboration, the City and County have worked together to increase ticketing for the sale of unstamped cigarettes. Starting in April 2012, inspectors from the Cook County Department of Revenue and BACP began to ticket violators of both the City and County's ordinances related to sales of unstamped cigarettes. In the past, each inspector could only write City or County tickets.

"In addition to enhancing inspector efficiency, our collaboration with Cook County has resulted in illegal tobacco sale citations that would not have otherwise been prosecuted," said Rosemary Krimbel, Commissioner, Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection, "We will work to strengthen our partnership with the County to ensure that we are using every tool available to stop this illegal activity."

Since April 2012, the County has issued 780 citations on behalf of the City, while the City has issued almost 500 of the County's citations. These are violations that would not have otherwise been cited.

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