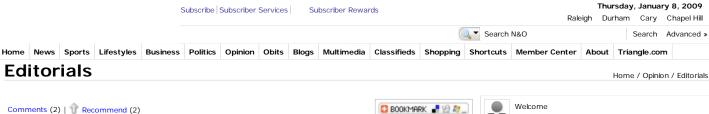


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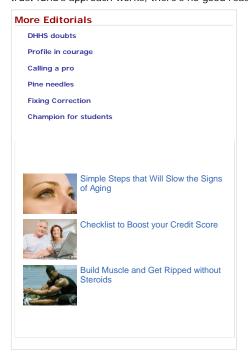


## So not cool

PRINT Published: Mon, Jan. 05, 2009 12:30AM Modified Mon, Jan. 05, 2009 06:11AM TEXT SIZE: 🔘 🔘 Even in the nation's most prolific tobacco-growing state, there is no patriotic duty to smoke. That might seem obvious, given the damage that tobacco addiction can do to heart, lungs and

other body machinery. But suffice it to say that a powerful industry was never too enthused about putting the brakes on recruitment of a new generation of smokers. That's all the more reason to salute the progress made by North Carolina's Health and Wellness Trust Fund in dissuading young people from lighting up. The decline in the number of teenage smokers may not be dramatic, but the trend is in the right direction, and showing better results than the national average. Gov-.elect Beverly Perdue, who has headed the trust

The fund's message, often relayed teen to teen: smoking is dangerous and, well, yucky. Between 2005 and 2007, the number of middle-school smokers in the state dropped from 5.8 percent to 4.5 percent, and among high schoolers from 20.3 to 19. Years from now, if this trend continues, lives will be saved and public expense spared. With proof in hand that the trust fund's approach works, there's no good reason not to push even harder.



fund as lieutenant governor, should be proud.

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