

# Student group tells council meeting of smoking's dangers

By Charles Doud  
THE MADERA TRIBUNE

Students who belong to a group called SWAT, or Students Working Against Tobacco, made a presentation to City Council members Wednesday, promoting the possible declaration of Madera's city parks as tobacco free.

They were accompanied by Alan Gilmore and Maria Barragan of the Madera County Health Department, who pointed out the dangers of smoking, especially to

**SEE COUNCIL, PAGE 3**



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Students who belong to a group called SWAT or Students Working Against Tobacco pose with signs after a presentation to city council members. The group recently helped removed hundreds of used cigarette butts from city and county parks, and are advocating for Madera to join a growing list of Valley cities that prohibit smoking or tobacco use in parks. Students, from left, are Stephanie Nathen, Graciela Valdez, Elexity Ortiz, Bella, Angela, Maria Barragan, Fabiola Romero-Campos, and program manager Alan Gilmore and Jasmine Gallegos of the Madera County Public Health Department.

## Council

Continued from Page 1

young people.

The SWAT group recently helped pick up hundreds of cigarette butts from city and county parks.

They are advocating for Madera to join a growing list of Valley cities that prohibit smoking or tobacco use in parks.

Gilmore said cigarette waste constitutes 38 percent of all the waste in the city's parks and on its streets and sidewalks.

He said it can take years for a typical cigarette filter to deteriorate.

He also said tobacco smoke continued to be a health hazard, even though more smokers are turning to ENDS — Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems — to get their to get

their nicotine hits.

Although there was no action item on the council agenda having to do with smoking, several council members indicated they would favor a measure mandating smoke-free parks should one ever come before them.