

revised draft. lte re NYDaily News, "Big Tobacco ... Firefighters" by Kevin James. Includes Kevin Osborne's suggestions, in addition to those from EM, JRN and MP.

To the Editor:

Kevin James' column ("Big Tobacco Owes a Debt to City Firefighters" Aug. 28) suggests Philip Morris sat on technology for years that, had we used it, would have made cigarettes less likely to cause fires. Additionally, he criticizes our longstanding support of firefighter organizations, citing documents from 1984 in the process.

The facts are: our research in this area has been directed toward the development of a product with reduced ignition propensity that adult smokers will likely accept and that doesn't increase the known health risks of smoking. This has proven to be a challenging task that took us a long time to develop and apply to the manufacturing process.

Early this year we announced we had developed and would put into consumer testing a new type of cigarette paper called *PaperSelect*<sup>™</sup>, that may make a cigarette less likely to ignite certain fabrics. In July, we announced that new *PaperSelect* would soon be available on our Merit brand cigarettes nationwide. Currently, we have the capacity to support a national launch on Merit; however we do not yet have the capacity to support a brand the size of Marlboro brand.

While we are encouraged by our results to date, we have long recognized that no cigarette, including ours made with *PaperSelect*, is "fire-safe." That is why we have supported, and will continue to support, fire marshals and firefighter organizations to help raise fire safety awareness and to provide information that would help reduce the risk of fires started by carelessly handled cigarettes. That support has always been public, aboveboard and motivated by the concerns about fire safety we share with those organizations.

We know that confrontation is not a sensible way to address the real social issue that our product raises. That is why we are committed, as a company, to addressing these issues in the most responsible way we know how, and to dealing openly and candidly with our critics. And that's why, with or without legislation, we are adding a new paper

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technology to our cigarettes that may move us toward the goal Mr. James and Philip Morris share - reducing fires caused by carelessly handled cigarettes.

Sincerely,

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