



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Blaine County Alcohol Compliance Task Force to Begin Local Compliance Checks

(Hailey, Idaho) – The Blaine County Alcohol Compliance Task Force was created this spring as a strategy by the Blaine County Community Drug Coalition and local law enforcement to reduce youth access to and incidents with alcohol. All local law enforcement departments, Blaine County Sheriff, Bellevue Police, Hailey Police, Ketchum and Sun Valley Police are involved in this effort, and are working with the Idaho State Police Alcohol Beverage Control in Boise regarding licensee regulations. All establishments licensed to sell alcohol in Blaine County will be randomly checked to ensure their compliance in not selling alcohol to minors. Each business has been personally notified by their local law enforcement of the program's intent in hopes of achieving 100% compliance. Business will be notified on their results and the press will be regularly informed. Server/Clerk training is being offered and hosted thanks to Ketchum Police Department efforts in becoming nationally certified TIPS (Training for Intervention Procedures) trainers. Both Sun Valley and Hailey Police departments have also recently received training around compliance issues.

Chief Gunter of Hailey Police explained, "It is not our intent to sting any local businesses, but it is our commitment to valley parents that we will not tolerate underage purchases. We have hand delivered letters to each licensee to educate them of our program, ask for their support, and to offer their employees training on preventing underage purchases, prior to our compliance program's start date."

Blaine County Drug Coalition Director Basolo stated that an ongoing program to check business compliance is a nationally proven strategy to reduce access by youth, which over time, reduces youth usage rates. Basolo said, "Nationally, only 11% of alcohol underage youth obtain, comes from underage purchases and 65% come from parent's homes or from the homes of friend's parents, yet it is important to send a signal to the community that we care about these kids and will do what we can to limit their access, through either underage purchases or the supply of alcohol to minors, by adults. Why do we care? Done correctly, this inexpensive and effective tool can help reduce alcohol related incidents involving youth. Alcohol seriously affects adolescent brain development, kills 6.5 times more young people every year than all other drugs combined, and the average age of youth taking their first drink in Idaho is 12. We know a young person who starts drinking by age 15 has a 45% chance of becoming alcohol addicted, six times the rate of those who wait until age 21. In 2007, underage drinkers in Idaho consumed over 13% of all alcohol sold in the state, totaling more than \$98 million. Underage drinking costs Idaho more than \$250 million each year! As has been reported, usage rates for youth here are dramatically higher than state averages; we have a major public health concern."

Server/Clerk training for all licensees is being offered on July 8th from 09:30 to 2:30 at the Ketchum City Hall. The cost is minimal – \$15.00 per attendee to cover the cost of materials; licensees are highly encouraged to seek this training for their employees who serve/sell alcohol.

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