



News Release

9079 SE McLoughlin Blvd. - Portland, Oregon 97222-7355
www.oregon.gov/olcc

For more information:
Christie Scott, 503-872-5002
Jason Evers, 541-388-6292

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Only 44% of Umatilla County businesses pass OLCC minor sales check

Bend, Ore. – Nine businesses in Umatilla County were checked for alcohol sales to minors on June 17 by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission. Only 4 of the licensees passed the check by refusing to sell alcohol to the minor volunteer.

The 44 percent passing rate is significantly below the 2007 state average of 78 percent. The commission performs the minor sales checks in an effort to reduce drinking by minors, which is a serious problem throughout the state. The OLCC tests about 1,300 licensed liquor businesses each year.

"The fact that over half the licensees failed is really disappointing," said Jason Evers, Bend Regional Manager. "We not only want to prevent minors from becoming intoxicated, but we want to keep them from getting any alcohol in the first place, especially when it comes in the form of a direct sale at a licensed premises."

The OLCC offers a free training course on how to check ID's. Participants learn how to identify false identification and the laws regarding minors and alcohol. Additional training opportunities are available including classes for store clerks and service permit holders. Interested persons can call the local OLCC office to schedule a training session.

The following licensees were tested and passed the compliance check: **Elvis's Bar & Grill**, 2016 Airport Rd, Pendleton; **The Hut Restaurant**, 1400 SW Dorion, Pendleton; **Blue Mountain Cider Co.**, 235 E. Broadway Ave., Milton-Freewater; and **Sam's Corner Market**, 107 E. Broadway, Milton-Freewater.

The following licensees did not pass the sales check: **Helix Market & Pub**, 206 Concord, Helix; **Tollgate Store**, 62393 Hwy 204, Weston; **Fountain Family Restaurant**, 190 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater; **Good Guys Food Mart**, 84802 N> Hwy 11, Milton-Freewater; and **The Oasis at Stateline**, 85698 Hwy 339, Milton-Freewater.

Servers, bartenders and licensees whose employees sell alcohol to the minor or do not verify the minor's age, are subject to OLCC administrative penalties including fines or suspensions. Store clerks who sell can be cited with criminal charges and a minimum \$350 fine. Licensees or their employees can be held liable for alcohol-related damages and injuries if they serve or sell alcohol to a minor.

Under Oregon law, businesses in cities with a population of 20,000 or more have an equal chance of being randomly selected for a minor decoy compliance check. A business can also be selected for a compliance check if there is a documented complaint of sales to minors. Businesses in cities with a population under 20,000 and unincorporated areas in counties are not subject to these selection requirements.

During the sales checks, a minor volunteer attempts to purchase alcohol from a licensed business to see if staff are checking ID's correctly and refusing to sell alcohol to anyone under 21. Commission inspectors or other law enforcement officers supervise the minor volunteers. The volunteers carry their own legal ID and do not disguise their age or lie to encourage the sale of alcohol.

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Promoting the public interest through responsible alcohol sales and service