



# News Release

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## **OLCC improves customer service for wineries, breweries, distributors, wholesalers, warehouses and growers**

**Portland, Ore.** – With the expansive growth of the industry, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission recognized a need for improved communication and reevaluated the process of how hundreds of Oregon licensees reported privilege tax. The new plan includes reaching out to as many licensees as possible, accommodating the businesses with customized forms and providing on-line instructions; making the process much more user-friendly.

Licensees who report privilege tax are wineries, breweries, wholesalers, distributors, warehouses, wholesalers of malt beverages and wine as well as growers. Privilege tax is a tax on malt beverages, cider and wine which is calculated by the gallon or barrel, depending on the product.

So far, OLCC employees have met with nearly a dozen licensees one-on-one and expect that number to grow. OLCC employees are also hosting booths at Federal Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau workshops across the state to answer questions, receive suggestions and provide education. Through the workshops, staff have reached over 300 licensees.

“This is a win-win situation,” says Debbie Amsberry, OLCC Financial Services Assistant Director. “We understand each other better and are building relationships that will help us to address questions and issues in the future. We want them to know that we’re here to make it easier and help them through the process.”

Common topics include, filling out forms correctly, educating licensees on how the privilege tax works, and reviewing the statutes and requirements related to privilege tax.

According to Amsberry, the extra time spent with customers now helps streamline processes down the road. By meeting with licensees and learning more about the industry, staff are using the language and terms used by the licensees to revise forms and make communication easier. Also, by knowing more about the industry, staff can better assist the licensees with viable solutions to issues that will fit the needs of the business. There are over 1,500 licensees that report privilege tax to the state and the number is growing every day. This new education will help with staff with audits and make the process easier for everyone involved.

“Don’t be afraid to call the OLCC to give them input,” said Robb Bell owner of Cathedral Ridge Winery. “Because their redo of the regulations for shipping was a massive improvement and responsive to our concerns. It was time well spent from all parties.”

Based on feedback from licensees, OLCC has improved the web site, making it easier to access, navigate and find the correct forms. The forms have also been updated to make them simpler. Instead of a one-size fits all approach, there are now several forms tailored to each kind of business. New language on the forms makes them easier to read and understand.

Payment of privilege tax for wine, cider and malt beverages is described in Oregon Revised Statutes 473.005 through 473.992.

*Promoting the public interest through responsible alcohol sales and service*