

April 25, 2007

**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE FROM OREGON  
PARTNERSHIP\*\*\***

Contact: Pam Erickson, Pete Schulberg  
503-244-5211

**SALES OF ALCOHOL TO MINORS IN  
PORTLAND AREA TRENDING  
DOWNWARD**

**RECENT COMPLIANCE CHECKS IN MULTNOMAH  
COUNTY FINDING FEWER STORES, RESTAURANTS,  
AND BARS MAKING ILLEGAL SALES**

(Portland, Oregon) With another decoy mission coordinated by Oregon Partnership slated for this summer, it's apparent that retailers are getting the message about selling alcohol to customers under 21.

For the third consecutive operation carried out by Multnomah County law enforcement officers, the percentage of randomly selected retailers selling alcohol to minors has dropped substantially.

Of the 148 retail establishments visited on March 28<sup>th</sup>, 18% (25 establishments) sold alcoholic beverages to minors. That's compared to an illegal sales rate of 23% in November, 2006 and a 27% rate from July, 2006.

The statewide averages for decoy operations amount to about a 24% illegal sale rate.

Compliance checks are a proven method to reduce sales of alcohol to underage drinkers. The underage decoys attempt to purchase alcoholic beverages.

"We're hoping the next operation continues this welcome trend," said Pam Erickson, deputy director of Oregon Partnership, a non-profit alcohol and drug prevention organization that spearheaded the missions under a grant from the Oregon Department of Human Services.

“Our message is getting out there to retailers – that selling alcohol to minors is not only against the law with severe penalties, but dangerous.”

Those who sell alcohol to minors are charged with a misdemeanor and face the possibility of jail time and/or fines. In addition, bartenders and business owners face additional penalties levied against their permits and licenses by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission.

For example, someone with a liquor license could face a fine of \$1,650 or a ten-day suspension for a first offense.

The March decoy operation targeted 137 businesses and included members of the Portland Police Bureau, the Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office, the Gresham Police Department, the Fairview Police Department, the Troutdale Police Department and the OLCC.

In recent years, the OLCC has beefed up its compliance checks statewide.

Alcohol use is associated with the leading causes of death of young people. According to the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, underage drinking costs Oregonians \$697 million a year in medical costs, pain and suffering and work loss costs.

Youth who start drinking before the age of fifteen are four times as likely to become addicted as adults compared to those who wait until the age of twenty one.

Oregon Partnership is urging licensed businesses to become members of the Responsible Vendor Program, which trains and educates employees about the law and techniques for avoiding alcohol sales to minors. The free program has found that those who participate are less likely to sell alcohol to minors.

Pete Schulberg  
Communications Director  
Oregon Partnership  
Dir - 971-244-1375  
Cell - 503-502-5369  
[www.orpartnership.org](http://www.orpartnership.org)