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*****MEDIA ADVISORY FROM OREGON PARTNERSHIP*****

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**Multnomah County Law Enforcement Agencies Team Up Tonight to Reduce
Alcohol Sales to Minors**

Decoy Operations Continue To Get Results

(Portland, Oregon) Oregon Partnership, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission and several Multnomah County law enforcement agencies will conduct compliance checks tonight - using decoys - at some 80 randomly-selected grocery stores, bars, taverns and restaurants in hopes of reducing alcohol sales to minors.

The decoy teams will depart from the Multnomah County Sheriff's Hanson Building at 12240 N.E. Glisan St. at approximately 5p.m. The operation is expected to be concluded by 10 p.m.

Media crews are asked to check in with Carl Lewis, OLCC regional manager.

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

“We do these decoy operations so that the folks who sell alcohol get the message loud and clear about selling to people under 21,” says 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.

Each team will include two unmarked vehicles, police officers, OLCC inspectors and decoys. The decoys, 17-20 years old, are usually police cadets or college students in a criminal justice program.

Last June - for the fourth 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 157 retail establishments visited on June 20th, 19.7% (31 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.

People who sell alcohol to minors are charged by the police with misdemeanors and face the possibility of one year in jail and/or a \$6,250 fine. In addition, bartenders and business owners face additional penalties levied against their permits and licenses by the OLCC.

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

Tonight's decoy project targeting about 80 businesses will include 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.

"We experienced super cooperation among all the law enforcement agencies that took part and hope that the folks who sell alcohol got the message loud and clear, said Erickson.

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.