

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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SALINAS BAR SURRENDERS LICENSE TO ABC AFTER 8 ARE ARRESTED ON ILLEGAL DRUG CHARGES

Salinas -Investigators from the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) today accepted the surrender of a liquor license from the owner of the La Fama Bar, 13 ½ East Lake Street in Salinas after eight people, all of the Salinas area, were arrested for illegal drug crimes inside the bar.

The ABC received multiple complaints about the La Fama Bar from residents of Salinas and the Salinas Police Department. The La Fama Bar is owned by Benito Juarez. Today Juarez turned in his license to the ABC which means the bar is no longer licensed to sell alcoholic beverages.

On Friday, November 19, The ABC Special Operations Unit (SOU) culminated a six month investigation by executing a search warrant and making eight arrests. During this investigation, the SOU undercover investigators purchased “Crack” cocaine on different occasions from different bar patrons. During these visits multiple buys of “Crack” cocaine were made, several were completed with the knowledge of a bar employee and while the investigators were inside of the premises.

Prior to serving the search warrant, ABC undercover investigators purchased approximately 4.2 grams of crack cocaine from a bar patron and then later arrested him. Once the search warrant was executed, a bartender was arrested for allowing narcotic transactions to occur inside of the bar. Investigators arrested seven other individuals.

ABC Investigators arrested the individuals on a variety of drug charges including sales of narcotics to undercover investigators, possession of drug paraphernalia while inside the bar and one individual was arrested for a parole violation.

Investigators also found a baggie containing 5.2 grams of “Crack” cocaine located inside the premises. Several additional baggies of cocaine were found through out the bar as people were alerted that the police were in the area and about to make entry.

“The surrender of this license will help make for a safer and stronger community” said ABC Director Jerry Jolly. Salinas Police Chief Daniel M. Ortega added, “This is another example of an outside agency assisting our community in ridding it of significant criminal activity. On behalf of the Salinas Police Department and the citizens of our city, I extend my sincerest thanks and gratitude for the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) for their efforts in this investigation.”

The Special Operations Unit is a Departmental Task Force designed to deal with the most problematic ABC licensed premises.

Fore more information contact Joe Galvan of the ABC Special Operations Unit at (916) 263-7918.