

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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ABC and Salinas Police Cite 3 Cab Drivers for Furnishing Alcohol to Minors

(Salinas, Monterey County) – Investigators of the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) and Officers from the Salinas Police Department cited three cab drivers for furnishing alcohol to minors. The actions were the result of a compliance check operation on Friday, December 22, 2006 in which minors under the direct supervision of the investigators attempted to have cab drivers purchase alcohol for them and then deliver the alcohol to them at an undisclosed location. All three cab drivers who were contacted furnished the alcohol to the minors, which is illegal.

Those who furnish alcohol to minors face a minimum fine of \$1000, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation.

ABC organized the decoy operation after receiving complaints from the community that persons under the age of 21 were calling cab companies to purchase and deliver alcohol to them. ABC and Salinas Police wanted to recognize the efforts of the non-profit organization named Safe Teens Empowerment Project in Salinas (STEPS), a project of Sun Street Centers, because this group organized the decoys who worked the Friday night operation.

ABC is conducting the compliance checks state-wide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Young people under the age of 21 have a higher rate of drunken driving fatalities than the general adult population.

Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980's. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities as low as 10 percent or even below. The latest violation rate state-wide is almost 24 percent, or nearly one in five retail licensees selling to minors.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that liquor licensees are complying with the law.

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