

**DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **ABC MINOR DECOY GRANT PROGRAM CONCLUDES WITH OVER 1600 ARRESTS** *At the Same Time, Compliance Rate among Licensed Businesses Increases*

**(Sacramento)** - Investigators of the Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) in partnership with 29 local law enforcement agencies arrested over 1600 individuals between October 1, 2004 and June 30, 2006 for selling alcoholic beverages to minors. The arrests were the direct result of a \$1.9 million California Office of Traffic Safety Grant that was awarded to ABC to combat the problem of underage drinking.

ABC wrapped up the grant program after conducting nearly 750 Minor Decoy Operations during the 18 month period resulting in 11, 282 visits to ABC licensed premises. Final statistics show businesses are also more compliant. Operations were conducted throughout the State of California.

“The Schwarzenegger Administration is committed to combating the problem of underage drinking and creating safer and stronger communities,” said ABC Director Jerry Jolly. “One of the most encouraging signs in this grant program was the increase in the compliance rate,” said Director Jolly. “When the grant started the compliance rate among licensed businesses hovered near 80% statewide, at the grant’s conclusion that figure went up to nearly 86%.”

ABC District Administrator Kathleen Lenihan managed the program and said the activities have increased awareness of the problem of sales of alcohol to minors. “Most businesses are doing a good job but there are some that need to know they must stay vigilant about checking identifications and saying no to minors who try to buy alcohol,” Lenihan said.

The program figures indicate businesses are doing a better job of checking identifications and are helping to prevent underage drinking.

Persons who sell to minors face a minimum fine of \$250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, ABC will take administrative action against the business’s alcohol license. That may include a fine, a suspension of the license, or the permanent revocation of the license. Most of the businesses that sold alcohol to minors were disciplined for the violations.

ABC is conducting the compliance checks state-wide to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Statistics have shown that 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 lower. In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that licensees are complying with the law.

For more information contact ABC District Administrator Kathleen Lenihan at (916) 419-2507. ABC is a Department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Sunne Wright-McPeak, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.