

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Five Arrested During ABC Operation

(Santa Maria) – Investigators from the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) arrested five suspects on December 5, 2008 during a Decoy Shoulder Tap Operation in the City of Santa Maria.

The Decoy Shoulder Tap program targets adults who purchase alcohol for people less than 21 years of age. Under the program, a minor under the direct supervision of a peace officer will stand outside a liquor or convenience store and ask patrons to buy them alcohol. The minor indicates in some way he or she is underage and cannot purchase the alcohol. If the adults purchase alcohol for the minor decoy, the peace officers arrest and cite them for furnishing alcohol to the minor.

The penalty for furnishing alcohol to a minor is a minimum \$1,000 fine and 24 hours of community service.

The program is intended to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors. Statistics show they generally have a higher rate of drunken driving crashes than adults. According to the American Medical Association, underage drinking can increase chances of risky sexual behavior and teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency, compromise health, and result in unintentional injury and death.

During the operation, fifteen adults were contacted by a minor decoy and five agreed to illegally buy alcohol for the minor decoy.

ABC is a department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, which is under the direction of Secretary Dale E. Bonner, a member of the Governor's Cabinet.