

DEPARTMENT OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE CONTROL

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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ABC CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY

(Sacramento) – California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Director Jerry Jolly today announced the department's 50th anniversary.

On Saturday, January 1, 1955, the ABC began operations after Californians voted to establish an agency to license and regulate California's huge liquor industry. "The ABC's primary function in 1955 was to ensure that businesses licensed to sell, manufacture or distribute alcohol were following the law and that mission hasn't changed," said Director Jolly.

"As one of our highest priorities, we must also continue to enforce the underage drinking laws and do everything we can to keep alcohol away from minors," said Jolly. "Too many young people are either killed or seriously injured because they are sold or given alcohol."

The department has developed a special anniversary badge for all of its active and retired sworn officers. In addition, the ABC has formed a committee that researched historical documents and helped develop a location on the ABC Website at www.abc.ca.gov so the public can enjoy learning about the 50 year history.

There has been significant change since 1955. State records show the following

	1955	2005
Number of Employees	Approximately 370.	454
Number of Sworn Personnel	Approximately 282	219
Number of Offices	26	28
Number of Licenses	31,049	75,000
On-Sale General License Fee	\$6000	\$12,000
Off-Sale General License Fee	\$3000	\$12,000
California's Population	13,004,000 (1955 US Census)	35,484,453 (2003 US Census)

The ABC was formed in 1955 after voters approved Proposition 3 that moved the licensing and regulation of California's alcohol industry from The State Board of Equalization to the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC).

In the 1950's there was a concentrated effort by the ABC to enforce the laws.

The 1960's brought "Operation 21" a focus on sales of alcohol to persons under 21 and the investigation of fake identification. There was also a new policy that declared it was "contrary to public welfare and morals" to allow female topless employees to commingle with bar patrons. The 1960's also established more input from community leaders and members about the location of licensed premises in their communities.

The 1970's brought more change. In 1971, The California Supreme Court ruled it was legal for women to become bartenders. Up until that time, it was illegal to employ a female bartender unless she was the spouse of the owner. The 1970's is also remembered as a decade with a focus on Organized Crime. In June 1977, the Department received its first Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) grant, The DUI Project, which addressed the serving practices of licensees in Los Angeles and provided training to licensees. During this decade, the Glendale Police Department was the first known police department to use the Minor Decoy Program on an ongoing basis.

The 1980's brought about guidelines from ABC for the use of Minor Decoy Operations by local law enforcement. These operations are compliance checks in which minors under the direct supervision of investigators, attempt to purchase alcohol from retail licensees. 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 16% percent, or less than one in five retail licensees selling to minors.

The 1990's included huge challenges as the State of California wrestled with a large budget deficit. The ABC experienced a sizable reduction in staff, nearly 44% of the sworn staff transferred, retired or left state service when state revenues were low. In 1991 the Department began its Licensee Education on Alcohol and Drugs (LEAD) Program, providing training to retail licensees. 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. In addition, the State legislature passed significant legislation giving ABC and local law enforcement new tools to deal with alcohol-related crime, including ABC Three Strikes Law, permitting ABC to revoke a license on the third sale to a minor in three years.

In 1995, the ABC began The Grant Assistance Program (GAP). This program helps local law enforcement agencies combat alcohol-related crimes through prevention, education and enforcement. To date the ABC has granted \$17.5 million to over 230 local law enforcement agencies since the program began. In 1998 the Decoy Shoulder Tap Program was established. This program targets adults who furnish alcohol to minors outside of licensed stores.

The current decade has seen an increase in OTS grant-funded programs, including TRACE (Target Responsibility for Alcohol Connected Emergencies). TRACE provides a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week hotline for first responders to contact ABC when they encounter an alcohol-related emergency involving a person under 21. ABC then investigates the source of alcohol to hold accountable those adults and/or businesses who furnish alcohol to minors. OTS has also funded ABC to work with local law enforcement and campuses to address underage drinking and student alcohol abuse at CSU and UC campuses. Under the Schwarzenegger Administration, the Department has moved to performance-based management, which focuses on establishing targets for organizational performance and increasing efficiency and effectiveness in licensing and enforcement.

The ABC has 24 district offices throughout California. The department licenses 7% of all businesses in California including the State's world class wine industry. 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.

The department recently celebrated the anniversary with a picnic in Southern California involving current and retired ABC employees and their families. A large celebration was also held in Sacramento on Saturday, October 29, 2005. Over 250 people attended including Business, Transportation and Housing Secretary Sunne Wright McPeak, ABC Director Jerry Jolly and four former ABC Directors, Jay Stroh, Manuel Espinoza, Baxter Rice and George Reece.

For more information log on to www.abc.ca.gov and look for the ABC 50th Anniversary Home Page.