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ABC Awarded \$853,000 Grant

Grant comes from the California Office of Traffic Safety for Multiple Programs

SACRAMENTO –The California Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) today announced that it has been awarded an \$853,000 Grant that will help fund operations for a number of departmental programs that combat underage drinking and educate licensees about alcoholic beverage laws in California.

“Keeping alcohol out of the hands of youth is a huge priority for the ABC,” said ABC Director Jacob Appelsmith. “Those under 21 suffer a higher rate of drunken driving fatalities than the general adult population. This grant will help reduce youth access to alcohol. It will also help businesses by providing free classes about California’s alcoholic beverage laws.”

The grant was awarded to the ABC by the California Office of Traffic Safety (OTS) through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). “This grant can help keep young drivers safe. It also provides businesses with an opportunity to have their employees educated through responsible beverage service classes taught by ABC law enforcement personnel,” said Christopher Murphy, Director of the Office of Traffic Safety. “OTS is very pleased to partner with ABC in this important effort.”

The grant will help fund ABC’s Minor Decoy and Shoulder Tap Decoy operations, Trapdoor operations and quarterly classes for licensees and their employees that are taught through ABC’s Licensee Education on Alcohol and Drugs (LEAD) Program. The funds will allow for approximately 15 mini-grants that can be awarded to local law enforcement agencies to combat underage drinking in their communities. A primary goal of the grant is to reduce the availability of alcohol to minors through Minor Decoy, Shoulder Tap Decoy and Trapdoor operations conducted by ABC Agents and local law enforcement officers. The funding will be used to pay for the training and staffing of as many as 300 enforcement operations throughout the state.

Minor Decoy operations are compliance checks in which teenagers, under the direct supervision of police officers, attempt to purchase alcohol from retail licensees. Those who sell to the minors face a minimum fine of \$250, and/or 24 to 32 hours of community service for a first violation. In addition, ABC may take administrative action against the alcoholic beverage license, which can result in a fine, suspension of the license, or permanent revocation of the license.

The Shoulder Tap program targets adults who purchase alcohol for minors on or around ABC licensed businesses. Minor decoys, under the direct supervision of police officers, approach and ask adult patrons of stores, bars or restaurants to buy them alcohol. The minors make clear to the patrons that they are underage and cannot purchase the alcohol themselves. If an adult purchases alcohol for a decoy, the police officers detain and cite the adult 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.

Trapdoor Operations involve ABC Agents and local law enforcement officers working together. They will work at the entrance to an ABC licensed businesses where they can check patron identifications. The primary goal of an "Operation Trapdoor" is to reduce underage access to alcohol by arresting minors who possess false ID. A secondary goal is to generate leads and develop potential confidential informants that will lead back to counterfeit operations and ID "mills."

The LEAD program began on January 1, 1991 with a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety. ABC has funded the program most years since 1995. The LEAD program provides practical information on serving alcoholic beverages safely, responsibly, and legally, and preventing illegal activity at ABC licensed establishments.

ABC is a Department of the Business, Transportation and Housing Agency.

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