

9 Dickinson businesses fail alcohol compliance checks

207Sydney Mook on Aug 5, 2016 at 8:41 p.m.



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Nine of 26 Dickinson establishments failed their alcohol compliance checks this quarter.

The Southwest Coalition of Safe Communities along with Southwestern District Health Unit, Dickinson Police Department and the Stark County Sheriff's Office recently conducted alcohol compliance checks in the City of Dickinson.

Businesses that failed included: JD's BBQ, Family Fair West, Lucky's Liquor, Vintage Liquor, Liquor Warehouse, Don Pedro's, Mavericks, The Rock and the Eagles Club.

Becky Byzewski, Safe Communities coordinator, believes that nine failing businesses is a rather high number, especially given there were less businesses that were checked compared to the last round of compliance checks.

"I think that's high, percentage-wise," she said. "I mean that's like a third, better than a third actually, so I do believe that is quite high."

Byzewski said businesses that have failed the compliance checks also have to be concerned about their employment numbers, since most businesses have some sort of provision that states an employee must be fired if they have failed a test. She added that some business have set up a rewards program if their employee passes a compliance check and are given a small bonus to thank them for doing a good job.

"There's a lot of management that do offer bonuses to the ones that pass, which is a good incentive for them," she said. "You know getting an extra hundred dollars or whatever they do. Each one is different. It just helps them do their job a little bit better and shows them being appreciated for doing a good job."

The purpose of conducting the underage alcohol compliance checks is to reduce the likelihood of illegal alcohol sales at checked alcohol establishments to minors. Byzewski said teenagers and young adults are hired to buy or be served alcohol in restaurants, bars and liquor stores. North Dakota has a state law allowing underage minors to work with Law Enforcement to do the educational alcohol compliance checks.

The youth work closely with area law enforcement and are told what to buy or ask for in the respective establishments. If the establishment refuses to sell or serve the underage person, they leave the establishment. However, if they are successful in buying alcohol or getting served alcohol, an officer will go into the establishment and charge the seller or server with a Class B misdemeanor charge of providing minors with alcohol. The server then must appear in court and is charged a \$300 fine and a

\$150 administrative fee. Letters are also mailed to all establishments within a few days, letting them know the check was done and if they passed or failed.

Byzewski said Safe Communities offers Alcohol Server Training classes monthly in which it trains individuals on over serving, asking for identification, how to read and look at IDs to identify altered or false IDs, and how to deal with overly intoxicated individuals. She said some employers require their employees to attend these courses along with training they may get at the establishment.

"If they lose their jobs to boot, that's a heavy price to pay," Byzewski said. "But like we tell them in class, 'You will fail if you fail to check an ID.'"

She said that ultimately she doesn't want to see the business fail. If a business has more than one failed compliance check in two years, it can be fined between \$500 and \$2,500 and may be forced to close its doors for one to three days, depending on the number of failures they receive in that two-year timeframe.

"Our job is not to trick the people," Byzewski said. "Just to make sure they're doing what they should be doing."