CONTROL STATE NEWS

VA: Virginia ABC’s Bureau of Law Enforcement Promotes 10 Employees

News Release
Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority
December 12, 2019

RICHMOND – The Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority’s (ABC) Bureau of Law Enforcement recognized 10 employees who recently received promotions at a ceremony on Dec. 3.

The ceremony, which was held at ABC’s Headquarters in Richmond, recognized eight sworn agents and two employees who were promoted within the last year. Their length of service to ABC ranges as far back as 1993.

The following individuals were recognized (new titles following their names):

- Donnie W. Brown, deputy chief of field operations, Richmond Regional Office
- Anthony R. Jimenez, special agent in charge, Richmond and Fredericksburg regional offices
- Barbara A. Storm, special agent in charge, Alexandria Regional Office
- Anthony T. Jankowski, assistant special agent in charge, Alexandria Regional Office
- Dawn M. Hanks, assistant special agent in charge, Hampton Regional Office
- John G. Sandhofer, assistant special agent in charge, Richmond and Fredericksburg regional offices
- Sergey I. Solodyankin, assistant special agent in charge, Charlottesville and Staunton regional offices
- David C. Miller, assistant special agent in charge, Richmond Regional Office
- Christopher M. Linton, manager of Licensing, Records and Tax Management
- Pamela Norris, tax management manager

Virginia ABC’s Chief Executive Officer Travis Hill, Bureau of Law Enforcement Chief Thomas Kirby and Senior Special Agent David Huff gave remarks honoring the newly promoted agents and employees as family and friends gathered to celebrate their achievements.

Huff recognized that ABC’s Bureau of Law Enforcement is a dynamic, highly trained law enforcement organization, which is representative of the diversity the commonwealth.

“These folks are truly the best of the best,” Kirby said. “Not only do I thank them for their service, but I’d also like to thank their families for their sacrifices in allowing their loved ones to serve and protect the commonwealth.”

“Their shared commitment to Virginia ABC is evident,” Hill said. “I appreciate their willingness to serve as leaders in this organization. It is through their efforts that we will maintain a professional public safety organization that provides regulation and education for our licensees, enhancing public safety and maintaining a sustainable business environment.”

Virginia ABC’s Bureau of Law Enforcement is a fully accredited law enforcement agency whose agents work directly with more than 18,000 ABC-licensed businesses to address non-compliance issues and reduce criminal activities involving alcohol. Their expertise in Virginia’s alcoholic beverage control laws and regulations makes them a valuable resource for future and existing ABC
licensees. The Bureau has nine regional enforcement offices around the state.

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UT: SLC bars carrying new single-use breathalyzers in response to changing liquor laws

FOX 13 Now
By Elle Thomas
December 12, 2019

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah – Just in time for the holidays, bars in Salt Lake City are increasing efforts to stop drunk driving with new single-use breathalyzers.

They say big things come in small packages. Well, when it comes to new breathalyzers popping up in downtown establishments, that is the case.

For a few dollars, patrons can purchase a packet – inside, a small tube with a color-coded indicator printed along the side and a tiny viewing window full of what looks like white rocks.

“Firmly press both white caps,” Kirk Bengtzen said as he placed a hand on each side of the tube. “Boom!” he said as he pushed it together.

Bengtzen is the owner of Twist Bar Bistro Social, one of the first establishments to start carrying the single-use BAC test.

“Blow for ten seconds, two times,” he said as he read the directions on the packet.

At Twist, they sell as many as forty breathalyzers a weekend, but with advertisements posted on the walls and in their menus, they hope people will start to take advantage of them even more.

“There are a lot of people that want to be responsible and they wonder, ‘Gosh am I there? Am I not?’” Bengtzen said.

Kirk said the benefits are two-fold — for the guests, they enjoy having the option (some enjoy the novelty of checking their Blood Alcohol Content), but for Twist it gives an added layer of protection.

“We log this, so it protects us from any liability,” Bengtzen said.

It also allows the establishment to avoid confrontation with anyone who believes they have not been over-served.

“Go ahead and blow, if you’re under, fine we’ll serve you another drink, but if you blow over then we both agree you’re done,” said Bengtzen.

No matter the reason for purchase, the goal is to do as the breathalyzer’s name suggests, ‘Think Twice,’ before drinking and driving.

Bengtzen said when the DUI limit went down and the strength of beer went up, it became a necessity for them to offer something to help their customers.

“When [the state] changed the liquor laws, nobody really understands how big of an impact that has on them,” Bengtzen said. “[Then] people could have a couple of beers and be fine but now, depending on their weight, it could only be one beer.”

The BAC tests are FDA approved and simple to use.

You break the seal by pushing the caps at each end of the tube towards each other and blow into it twice for ten seconds, after two minutes the white rocks in the viewing window will change color – you can then compare that color to the color scale which places you in one of four categories, 0.00%, 0.02%, 0.05% or 0.08%.

Fox 13 asked Kirk to show us the process, so he got a beer. But, considering he is a big guy, he followed the beer with a shot to ensure there would be a reading.

“Boom! Here’s to Twist and Fox 13!” he said as he lifted the shot glass in the air.

Following directions, he waited twenty minutes and then opened one of the breathalyzer packets.

“Alright here we go,” he said. “Blow this way?”

Just seconds after he started to blow you could see the viewing window start to change color.

“It is starting to change!” he exclaimed.

Even though Kirk said he ‘felt fine,’ the color he blew was right in between the 0.02% and 0.05% indicators – meaning, he shouldn’t be driving.

The breathalyzers are only five dollars with all proceeds going to the ‘Think Twice Foundation’ supporting victims that have been affected or impacted by drunk driving.

While the cost is relatively low, if you ask Kirk, the sense of security they provide is priceless.
“We have a moral obligation to protect our guests,” Bengtzen said. “I think it’s a great idea or I wouldn’t be doing it.”

Right now, the breathalyzers are only offered at Twist and the Green Pig, but Bengtzen said he wouldn’t be surprised if even more bars started to carry them in the coming months.

MI: Republic National Distributing Company overcoming liquor delivery delay issues, improvements still under way

Republic National Distributing Company
December 13, 2019

Republic National Distributing Company (RNDC), one of Michigan's distribution agents handling liquor and wine warehousing and delivery to local retailers, today announced it has made strides toward restoring timely and accurate deliveries to bars, restaurants and liquor retailers around the state.

"We have turned a corner and are well on the way to reaching our normal high level of service to our customers," said Joe Gigliotti, Region President of Control States for RNDC. "We still have work to do, and we apologize to those retailers who may still be seeing occasional slippage in delivery or are receiving incomplete orders. But our internal data shows far fewer customers seeing problems than in mid-November."

Earlier delays stemmed from RNDC's move into a new, highly automated $80 million warehousing facility in Livonia. A series of computer, training, bad weather and other issues resulted in customers getting orders three or more days late, many incomplete orders, and accounting delays.

"We have added staff, fixed mechanical issues and made important software improvements to address the problems we faced earlier," said Gigliotti. "Our decision to return some operations back to a facility we operated in Brownstown has been helpful. We also have improved customer communication and are providing updates regularly to the Michigan Liquor Control Commission."

"This has been an 'all hands on deck' issue for RNDC, and I'm pleased to say customer complaints are down, delivery schedules are generally back to normal, and we are pushing hard to address remaining problems," Gigliotti said.

Among those issues are catching up on accounting issues, improving inventory at the Brownstown facility to reduce out-of-stock orders, and ongoing adjustments to automated systems in the new Livonia facility.

Gigliotti said customers who experience problems should reach out via email to RNDC. Questions about an order of any kind can be sent to miservice@rndc-usa.com; questions about delivery should go to miorders@rndc-usa.com. Customers concerned about their delivery date can visit www.liquorstatus.com to see when orders should be arriving.

"We are confident that our investment in the new warehouse will prove a major benefit to Michigan retailers, liquor suppliers and the state of Michigan," said Gigliotti. "We have made measurable progress in resolving problems. We will continue to improve service levels in coming weeks, and RNDC will not be satisfied until we have fully earned the trust of our partners in the Michigan liquor delivery system."

LICENSE STATE NEWS

KS: Fair Board receives draft legislation allowing alcohol in common areas

Ottawa Herald
By John Green
December 12, 2019

The Kansas State Fair board this week approved the fair manager continuing to pursue draft legislation that would allow alcohol sales on the fairgrounds outside of designated wine or beer gardens.

The proposed changes to current law — which grants exemptions to where consumption of alcohol is prohibited by the state — would also transfer the majority of alcohol taxes collected on the sales to go into the state fair’s capital improvement fund.

State Fair general manager Robin Jennison said they received assistance from the Reviser of Statutes office at the Capitol in drafting the changes, which add about a half-dozen paragraphs to the existing law and delete one.

Currently, alcohol is allowed only in the grandstands and designated enclosed areas within the fairgrounds.

““This doesn’t say ‘Yes this will happen,’ but it does say the Fair Board can decide if they want to expand it to common consumption areas,” Jennison said. “We can set the borders.”

“I don’t know that it’s totally perfect,” Jennison said of the draft bill, “but it’s close to what we asked for.”
The language requires areas to be posted — whether with signs or on a map — which means the fair can still prohibit consumption in certain areas, such as near youth-focused venues.

Jennison said he planned to take the draft to vendors for their input before asking a lawmaker to introduce it during the next session.

“One thing we have to figure out is how to deal with it if there are violations,” Jennison said. “If there’s a violation, all concessionaries are liable for it. If someone goes in the beer garden, orders a beer, takes it out and gives it to an 18-year-old, the wine garden is just as liable as the beer garden. But we’ll figure something out.”

That might include something like issuing wrist bands connected with the sale, and anyone without a wrist band violates the law.

“I don’t think we want people being allowed to carry beer cans around the fairgrounds, either,” Jennison said. “That’s a bad look too.”

As drafted, the bill would allow consumption in common areas all year, not just during the fair, though any sales require a temporary permit issued by the division of Alcohol Beverage Control.

The bill allocates 16.154% of taxes collected on alcohol sales to go to the state general fund, with the remainder credited to the state fair’s capital improvements fund.

“We want to treat it like the sales tax (collected on sales at the fair),” Jennison said, which the Legislature last session allowed the fair to keep, replacing an annual $300,000 allocation the Legislature was supposed to make to the fair, but which it stopped paying more than a decade ago.

Jennison said he believed the alcohol tax should have been included in the sales tax bill approved last session, but that it was overlooked.

The provisions for allocation of the alcohol taxes would “expire,” the bill states, “if the state fair is located outside the city limits of the city of Hutchinson.”

During the board’s meeting in October, when it approved Jennison pursuing a draft bill, the board was divided over whether to allow alcohol consumption in common areas outside of beer or wine gardens. On Tuesday, no one voiced opposition to Jennison taking the next steps in pursuing the change.

The board is expected to take up the issue again at its January meeting, to formally vote on whether to seek to introduce the legislation.

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**INTERNATIONAL NEWS**

**United Kingdom: 'Hangover Days' For Employees Condemned By Alcohol Harm Charities**

“Knowing in advance that you’re going to drink to the point where you can’t get into the office the next day is a different story,” says Andrew Misell of Alcohol Change

Independent

By Sophie Gallagher

December 13, 2019

Businesses offering staff “hangover days”, rather than working from home or taking a sick day when you’re feeling worse for wear, have been criticised by alcohol harm charities.

Charities, including Alcohol Change UK and Drinkaware, say this practice could encourage binge drinking among employees who don’t have to worry about getting up for work the next day.

Digital Marketing firm, The Audit Lab in Bolton, is one such company which allows staff to be honest about why they won’t come into the office and take a dedicated hangover day.

Company director, Lee Frame, says it creates a flexible and honest workplace rather than having people pretend they have a more serious illness and need time off.

Frame says this will appeal to the younger generation and those without children and helps bring more flexibility into the workplace.

But not everyone is so optimistic about what this means for employees.

Andrew Misell, a director of Alcohol Change UK, told The Independent that although flexible working arrangements and increased trust between employers and employees is “good news”, having specified hangover days “might not be so positive”.

“There’s nothing wrong with having a drink, but knowing in advance that you’re going to drink to the point where you can’t get into the office the next day is a different story,” he says.

According to Alcohol Change UK over 167,000 working days are already lost each year because of alcohol and between 3-5 per cent of all work absence is caused by alcohol consumption.

And lost productivity due to alcohol use costs the UK economy more than £7 billion annually.

“We’d encourage employers to invest time in developing staff wellbeing initiatives which don’t involve alcohol,”
says Misell. “Doing that benefits everyone: it improves health, boosts inclusivity and opens the door to ways of having fun and relaxing which don’t require getting trolleyed.”

Elaine Hindal, CEO of Drinkaware agrees that such a policy encourages “risky drinking behaviours” by letting people drink a lot without worrying about turning up to work.

“Employers have a duty of care to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees,” she says, and adds that employers play a “vital role” in sending out messages about the risks of drinking to excess.

Hindal says hangover days also overlooks the diversity of workforces where employees may not drink alcohol. “In fact, our research tells us more people this year than last year don't drink alcohol,” she says.

A recent study from Drinkaware found more than half of people in work feel there’s too much pressure to drink when socialising with colleagues.

“We would encourage employers to carefully consider the facts about alcohol along with the health and wellbeing of their employees,” adds Hindal.

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**Canada: Ontario Is Finally Letting Airports Serve Booze 24 Hours A Day To Ease Your Travel Woes**

Narcity
By Dave Flaherty
December 12, 2019

A layover before or between flights can be a frustrating thing. But Ontario’s government is here to help you get those hours of waiting to pass more quickly. Alcohol at Pearson Airport can officially be served 24 hours a day thanks to new provincial legislation.

While Toronto Pearson was recognized for its exquisite customer service earlier this year, new rules laid out by the province are adding a bit more freedom for fliers.

As part of the Better For People, Smarter for Business Act proposed back in late October, it was suggested alcohol should be permitted to be served at airports such as Pearson and Billy Bishop all the way through the day.

And, on the morning of Thursday, December 12, Pearson's official account tweeted to announce that bill has now been ratified and Ontario’s airports will be allowed to do just that.

So now, instead of watching reruns of your favourite on-demand show on your phone for hours while waiting for your flight, you can grab a drink with your pals.

According to a government media release on the new act, these changes bring Ontario’s airport alcohol rules into line with those around the world.

The major restriction that airports will have to comply with is that these licensed bars and restaurants must be located beyond airport security.

Today the @ONgov officially passed a bill allowing 24-hour sales of alcohol at the province’s airports. This will result in greater choice and flexibility for our valued passengers.

So you can't just turn up at YYZ and hang out, not that you'd necessarily want to.

Before the changes were brought into effect, alcohol could only be served between the hours of 9 a.m. and 2 a.m.

According to a tweet from Pearson, the changes will bring "greater choice and flexibility" to passengers travelling out of Toronto.

However, the airport also reminded passengers and consumers to be "safe and responsible" in the way in which they take advantage of the change.

We would like to take this time to remind passengers to please enjoy alcoholic beverages in a safe and responsible manner during their time at the airport.

The act also looked to remove limits on the amount of wine, beer, and spirits that a person can bring in from another province for personal use.

Notably, the Ford government has made many moves to revamp alcohol sales in Ontario, including allowing bars to turn on the taps beginning at 9 a.m.

Meanwhile, the bill had also proposed back in October that Ontarians should be able to bring their dogs with them to bars with patios, among other places where "low-risk foods" are served.

The issue of dogs on patios had previously caused quite a ruckus a few months ago.
In particular, a number of businesses in Halifax received warnings from health inspectors to stop the practice. More information on that suggested reform has yet to be confirmed, but Ontarians can now enjoy a drink at any time of the day or night while on their travels.

*Cheers!*

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**PUBLIC HEALTH NEWS**

*Treating Alcohol Use with Ketamine? New Research Finds It May Help*

Healthline
Written by Gigen Mammoser
December 12, 2019

Once derided as a “club drug,” the anesthetic ketamine is facing a surge of interest from doctors and researchers who say it could treat certain psychiatric disorders. The most prominent among them: depression.

However, a pair of new studies show promise for a new area of ketamine therapy: alcohol use disorder.

Both studies are early indicators that ketamine could, along with other alcohol interventions like therapy, some day help people decrease or stop drinking. But there’s a lot more research to be done.

The first study, published earlier this month in The American Journal of Psychiatry, was a pilot study, the first of its kind, to test the effects of ketamine and mindfulness practice against a control for alcohol use disorder.

The study included 40 participants who, on average, consumed about 5 drinks per day. Most of the participants were white, and most were employed.

Participants were randomly assigned to either receive a single infusion of ketamine along with a 5-week regimen of motivational enhancement therapy, or midazolam, a sedative that helps with alcohol withdrawal, and the same therapy.

Researchers found that participants who received ketamine rather than midazolam had higher rates of abstinence (stopping drinking) following treatment, were less likely to relapse, had fewer days of drinking, and had fewer days of heavy drinking.

The beneficial results of the ketamine also persisted for several weeks after the single dose infusion.

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**INDUSTRY NEWS**

*Mergers, acquisitions change face of craft beer*

KPC News
By Matt Thomas
December 13, 2019

The landscape of craft and independent breweries tectonically shifted in 2019.

The number of mergers, acquisitions, openings and closing have been nearly impossible to keep up with and the first couple of weeks in December looks like it has only accelerated moving into 2020. Here are just some of the highlights from a very busy 2019.

In February, Anheuser-Busch/InBev purchases Cutwater Spirits, a business unit from Constellation owned Ballast Point Brewing. Known for their line of canned premade cocktails with premium spirits instead of malt-based alcohol, Cutwater has made large inroads this year as one the top growing lines of alcoholic beverages in 2019.

The third-largest craft brewery, Chico, California based Sierra Nevada purchased San Francisco based Sufferfest Beer Company in February. This was the first time Sierra Nevada has purchased another beer company in its 39-year history. Sufferfest is one of a new segment of beers promoting health, wellness and catered toward an active lifestyle, brewed with ingredients like bee pollen and sea salts, plus brewed to highlight their carbohydrates for post workouts or running.

Easton, Pennsylvania legacy independent brewery Weyerbacher sold a majority stake of ownership to a private investment group and filed for Chapter 11 Bankruptcy protection in April.

St. Louis, Missouri based Schlafly Brewery was sold by Sage Capital to members of the founding family, taking the brewery back to independent operation in May.

On May 9, Boston Brewing Company (makers of Sam Adams, Angry Orchard Cider, Twisted Tea and Truly Hard Seltzers) announced a merger with craft beer icon Dogfish Head Brewing for $300 million. As of December, the kinks are still being worked out as the two breweries attempt to streamline their distribution networks nationwide.

In June, Austin, Texas based Celis Brewery was sold at auction. As members of Pierre Celis’ family have tried to resurrect his brewery and beer over the past few years, the beer landscape has been a difficult one to establish a toe-hold.
In August, Anheuser-Busch/InBev purchased Cleveland, Ohio based Platform Brewing Company. One of the rising stars in craft/independent brewing landscape in 2018, the five-year-old company joins an ever-increasing list of formerly independent breweries owned by the world’s largest brewing company.

On Sept. 3, Grand Rapids, Michigan based Founders Brewing announce the further sale of the company from 30% to 90% share to Spanish brewer Mahou San Miguel. Founders Brewing founders Mike Stevens and Dave Engbers retain a 5% share of ownership, each.

On Sept. 12, it was announced that Roak Brewing of Royal Oak, Michigan acquired Marshall, Michigan based Dark Horse Brewing. This is the second time Roak Brewing has attempted to buy a fellow Michigan brewery, following their failed acquisition of Traverse City based Right Brain Brewing in 2018.

On Nov. 11, the on-again, off-again relationship between Anheuser-Busch/InBev and Craft Brewers Alliance finally ended with A-B purchasing the remaining 68.8% stake to take full ownership of the brewing group. CBA was the parent company of Kona Brewing, Red Hook, Omission Gluten-Removed, Widmer Brothers and others, as well as pH Experiments, an incubator for new product lines. The purchase came after an Aug. 23 expiration of an option for A-B to buy CBA, declining to pay the $24.50 per share price, instead paying a one-time $20 million fee.

Nov. 19, the fourth largest independent brewery in the United States, New Belgium Brewing agreed to terms with Australian brewing conglomerate Kirin in their Lion Little business unit. The change in ownership is still pending final approval by their employee-owners and is expected to finalize by the end of 2019.

On Nov. 20, Artisanal Brewing (Victory Brewing of Pennsylvania and Southern Tier Brewing of New York) purchased Bold Rock Hard Cider of Virginia, expanding their offerings into a new segment of the market and expanding their reach over the mid-Atlantic region.

Dec. 3, Constellation Brands sold their remaining ownership of Ballast Point Brewing to a small suburban Chicago based brewery Kings & Convicts. Constellation shook up the beer industry with the $1 billion purchase of Ballast Point in 2015 and has seemed to have a sense of buyer’s remorse ever since. Kings & Convicts opened with one brew pub in 2017, with a second location in Wisconsin in the planning stages. This is a big jump for a company that produced just 600 barrels of beer last year to assume control of a brand that will produce around 200,000 barrels this year.

On Dec. 4, Anderson Valley Brewing sold for the third time in its 32-year history, this time to a family in Northern California, keeping the company private. Founded in 1987 by Ken Allen, the brewery was sold in 2010 to Trey White and HMB Holdings.

This has been a tumultuous year for the independent craft beer segment, with more headwinds and upheaval to look forward to in 2020. The landscape of the industry has changed drastically in recent years, with a further shakeout likely to be on the horizon.

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**DAILY NEWS**

**A New Approach to Stop High-Risk Drunk Drivers**

U.S. News
By Robert Preidt, HealthDay Reporter
December 12, 2019

THURSDAY, Dec. 12, 2019 (HealthDay News) -- An individualized approach is needed to treat people at high risk of impaired (drunk) driving, a new report says.

Drunk driving accounted for 29% of U.S. motor vehicle deaths in 2018, the lowest percentage since 1982. But there was still an average of one alcohol-impaired driving death every 50 minutes, or 29 deaths a day, according to the Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA) report.

The GHSA calls for a different approach from the past system to catch and punish drunk drivers. Instead, the agency wants to focus on addressing the offender’s underlying problem to curtail repeat offenses.

A high-risk impaired driver is one who lacks the restraint or self-control to resist driving drunk. These drivers account for a disproportionately high number of road deaths.

High-risk drunk drivers meet one or more of three criteria: They drive with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of 0.15 g/dL or higher (almost twice the legal limit); have consumed both drugs and alcohol; and have more than one arrest for driving while intoxicated.

Repeat offenders cause about a third of drunk driving deaths each year, while high BAC offenders are involved in more than 60% of alcohol-related road deaths.

In 2018, 66% of drivers involved in fatal crashes had a BAC greater than 0.15 g/dL. And over the past 10 years, the number of impaired drivers killed in crashes who tested positive for both alcohol and other drugs has risen 16%.

Many high-risk drivers have both mental health and substance abuse disorders, according to Cambridge...
Health Alliance at Harvard Medical School in Boston. But their mental health disorders often go undetected.

"The traditional criminal justice approach holds these offenders accountable for each impaired driving incident, but to ensure that these high-risk impaired drivers don’t re-offend, we need to expand our approach beyond detection, arrest and conviction," said GHSA Chairman Darrin Grondel, who is also director of the Washington Traffic Safety Commission.

"The aim of this new report is to encourage states and their partners to take a more holistic approach to the problem by identifying and treating the cause of the offender’s behavior to reduce recidivism and promote long-term behavior change," he said in a GHSA news release.

An individualized approach may be more effective than the usual fines and jail time at deterring high-risk impaired drivers, according to experts.

Along with screening and assessment, an individualized approach tests drivers for alcohol and also other drugs.

But enforcement practices or policies that do not require drug testing mean that many drug-impaired drivers escape detection, and many states lack the resources to process drug screenings.

More information

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more on impaired driving.

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These 9 States Still Have Dry Counties (excerpt)

24/7 Wall St
By Evan Comen
December 12, 2019

When the 21st Amendment repealed national prohibition in 1933, the power to regulate the sale and consumption of alcohol was left to the states. While 16 states explicitly prohibit the creation of dry localities — and Wisconsin state law does not address the local sale of alcohol — the majority of states allow local jurisdictions to regulate alcohol as they see fit.

24/7 Wall St. identified the states that still have dry counties and reviewed the history and effects of the prohibition laws governing them. While some counties contain cities or towns that allow the sale of alcohol in some form, we focused on counties that both prohibit the sale of alcohol within county borders and do not contain any municipalities that allow the sale of alcohol.

Today, there are 83 counties in the United States where the sale of alcohol is completely prohibited. Dry counties are home to approximately 1.7 million Americans, or 0.5% of the U.S. population.

In many states with dry counties, laws restricting the sale of alcohol have long preceded national prohibition. Georgia, for example, first banned statewide alcohol sales in 1908, 12 years before the 18th Amendment and national prohibition went into effect. Mississippi first passed a statewide ban on alcohol sales in 1907, 13 years before national prohibition.

The majority of dry counties are located in the South, where religious beliefs echoing the Temperance Movement, which in the 1800s pushed for reduced alcohol consumption across the nation, continue to drive anti-alcohol sentiment. In other counties, the decision to ban alcohol may be related to public health. In Oglala Lakota County, South Dakota, for example — which ranks as the worst county to live in — alcohol abuse is rampant, and many advocates of prohibition believe that allowing the sale of alcohol may exacerbate the problem.

Advocates for repealing prohibition often cite the economic benefits of alcohol sales. Breweries and distilleries are major industries in the United States (here are America’s thriving industries in America), and can provide counties with millions of dollars in additional tax revenue. According to a study commissioned by Walmart, for example, turning all of Arkansas’ dry counties wet could generate an additional $100 million in economic activity annually.

For more on alcohol use in the United States, see how much people spend on alcohol in 22 major American cities.

Click to see the states that still have dry counties

https://247wallst.com/special-report/2019/12/12/states-that-still-have-dry-counties/2/

To determine the states that still have dry counties, 24/7 Wall St. used data from the National Alcoholic Beverage Control Association. NABCA data is current as of 2017 and was updated by 24/7 Wall St. using recent local news reports and government press releases.

Population data came from the U.S. Census Bureau’s American Community Survey and figures are five-year estimates for the period 2013 to 2017. Data on land and water area by county came from the Census Bureau’s 2010 decennial census. Data on the share of adults that report excessive drinking came from the 2019 County Health Rankings & Roadmaps, a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University
of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, and was aggregated for all dry counties using Census Bureau population data. All data are for the most recent period available.

WSWA Joins Coalition in Strong Opposition of Legislation to Increase Tax Rates for America’s Family-Owned Businesses

Proposed “Restoring Tax Fairness for States and Localities Act” Puts WSWA Members at Risk

News Release
WSWA
December 12, 2019

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America (WSWA) joined the Parity for Main Street Employers (PMSE) coalition in sending a letter of opposition to the House Ways and Means Committee, as they consider raising tax rates to pay for the temporary suspension of the $10,000 federal limit on state and local tax deductions (SALT). The coalition represents millions of individually and family owned businesses employing tens of millions of private sector workers in every community and every industry, including wine and spirit wholesalers, retailers and manufacturers.

“All of our members are family-owned businesses,” said WSWA Chairman Sydney Ross of Great Lakes Wine & Spirits. “The proposed legislation would hike our tax rates and make it even harder to compete with corporations in an open and competitive marketplace.”

“Our members invest and create jobs in communities across the country,” added WSWA President and CEO Michelle Korsmo. “We find immense value in this coalition of industries doing the same to fight for parity with corporations under the law.”

Family businesses across the country organized as S corporations or pass-through businesses, including nearly all WSWA members, pay 51 percent of all business income taxes in the United States. Under the proposed legislation, these taxes would rise, while providing little or no relief.

Individual tax rates will increase to 39.6 percent and apply to family businesses structured as pass-throughs. This would be further compounded by a measure set to lower the top income tax rate threshold from $600,000 to $496,000 (joint) for the next five years. Furthermore, the SALT cap does not apply to business SALT deductions, meaning most WSWA’s members would see no direct benefit from the relief but will be fully affected by the rate increase.

Under these proposed measures, WSWA members are at risk to lose the parity, or equality, with large corporations achieved through 2017’s Tax Cuts and Jobs Act. A recent study by EY reported that the 2017 bill largely succeeded in balancing the tax code, but only in the current deduction and 37 percent rate structure stay in place.

“These measures would undo a critical balance achieved in President Trump’s 2017 tax reforms,” continued Korsmo. “Our members and family owned businesses across the country depend on parity with large corporations to participate in competitive marketplaces and provide well-paying jobs to millions of hardworking Americans.

To read the open letter from the Parity for Main Street Employers Coalition, please visit: http://mainstreetemployers.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/PMSE-Steering-Committee-Letter-on-House-SALT-Bill-Final.pdf

MLB to treat marijuana like alcohol, will start testing for opioids, cocaine, more

NBC 15
By Nick Viviani, AP
December 12, 2019

SAN DIEGO (WMTV/AP) -- Major League Baseball will start testing for opioids and cocaine. But only players who do not cooperate with their treatment plans will be subject to discipline.

"Players are overwhelmingly in favor of expanding our drug-testing regimen to include opioids, and want to take a leadership role in helping to resolve this national epidemic," MLB Players Association Executive Director Tony Clark said.

Also, as part of the deal, Marijuana will be removed from the list of drugs of abuse and will be treated the same as alcohol as part of changes to the joint drug agreement between MLB and the players' association.

The league also plans to add educational programs to teach players about the dangers of opioid medications and "practical approaches to marijuana."

"The opioid epidemic in our country is an issue of significant concern to Major League Baseball. It is our hope that this agreement - which is based on principles of prevention, treatment, awareness and education - will help protect the health and safety of our Player," said
MLB Deputy Commissioner and Chief Legal Officer Dan Halem.

Talks to add testing for opioids began following the death of Los Angeles Angels pitcher Tyler Skaggs last summer. Testing until now had been limited to performance-enhancing substances and banned stimulants.