

## **Beer Run: Mapping Retail Alcohol Sale Rules Near Kenosha**

The state of Wisconsin alcohol laws clearly end retail sales at 12am (Midnight). In contrast, Illinois's Liquor control act of 1934, and subsequent amendments, have established that alcohol cannot be sold between the hours of 2 a.m. and 7 a.m. (3am – noon on Sundays). An interesting caveat to this law, is that it allows incorporated municipalities to establish their own rules in regard to alcohol licensing and sales, including the times that it can be sold. This has created a patch work of varying laws and ordinances across the state with some cities ending sales as early as 9pm while others are free to sell until 4am.

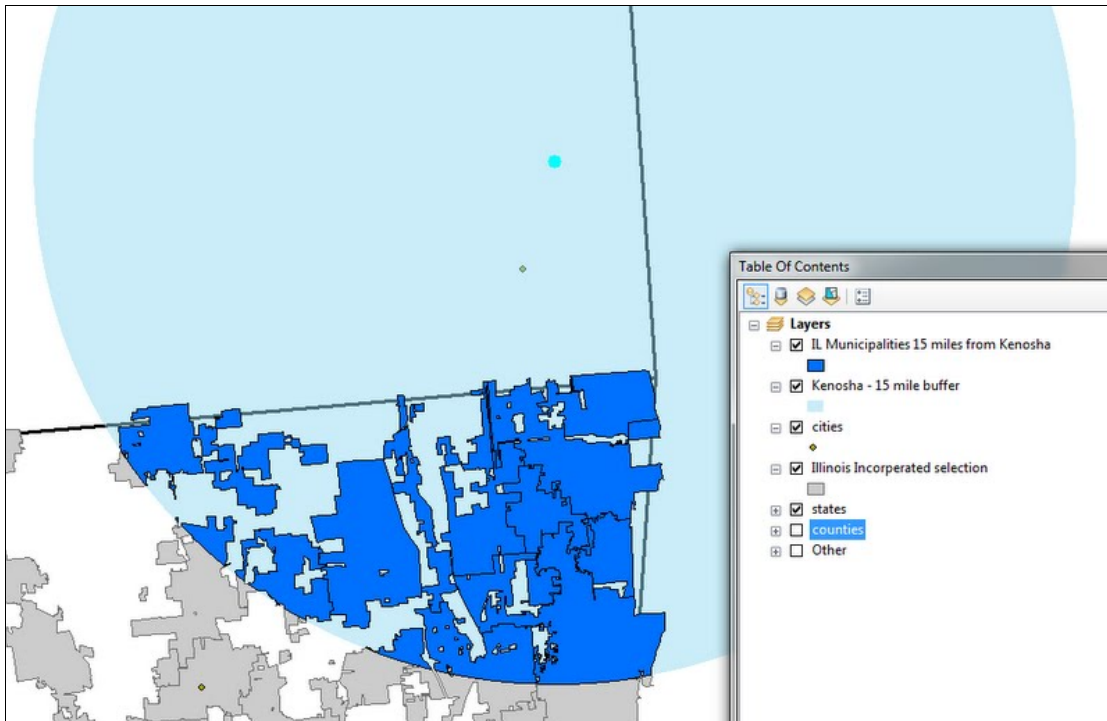
Several months ago, myself and two friends discovered this interesting discrepancy first hand. We had an obligation to attend and had hoped to enjoy some refreshing beverages afterwards. Unfortunately the event lasted longer then we had anticipated and had us leaving at 12:10am, past the time retail establishments can sell alcohol.

With a vague understanding of Illinois's alcohol laws, we collectively decided that we were close enough to the border that it seemed reasonable to head across the state line to make our purchase. While we were correct that Illinois law does allow for retail sales past 12am, we didn't realize that each town and village had their own stipulations which ended up forcing us to visit three different retailers in neighboring municipalities before finally being able to make our purchase.

This headache served as inspiration for my final project, as I chose to map the varying times at which retail sales end within a convenient driving distance of Kenosha. If this situation ever arises again, this map will be an invaluable resource.

The construction of the map entailed a couple of different parts:

First, using the U.S. Geological Survey's National Map viewer, I was able to extract and download a shapefile that contained the boundaries for all of the incorporated municipalities in Illinois. Once loaded into ArcGIS, using the cities layer and the buffer tool, I ascertained which of these municipalities were within a convenient driving distance (15 miles) of Kenosha (shown below)



I researched the codes and ordinances of each town and village on this shortened list of (Roughly 10-12), to find the time that licensed establishments within their jurisdiction had to stop selling. This information was added as a simple text field to the “municipalities within 15 miles” data set, which was then color coded by that field.

Since any businesses located outside of municipalities would fall under the Illinois state statute, I used the intersect tool with the original 15 mile buffer and the state of Illinois to create a layer which was colored to match any municipalities that end sales at 2am. As mentioned earlier, all of Wisconsin ends sales at 12am, so it was colored to match any municipalities with that same end time. All of areas outside of the original 15 mile “convenience buffer” were clipped and discarded.

Finally, since the map will primarily be used for travel, items like interstates, major roads and cities were added in addition to a legend.

