

LIQUOR LAW PROJECT INSPIRES REMARKABLE OUTCOMES

State of Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control

August 18, 2008

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A community collaboration and outreach project is hitting home runs for Arizona's liquor industry. Title 4 Rules, the guidelines for implementing Arizona liquor laws, are getting a sorely needed update.

Jerry Oliver, a 40-year law enforcement veteran and Director of the Arizona Department of Liquor Licenses and Control (DLLC), has tapped the expertise and experience of "front line" players to boost much-needed relevance and perspective into this rule writing process. Law enforcement officers, parents, bar owners, liquor distributors, neighborhood associations, liquor law trainers and attorneys from around the state – just to name a few – are participating. "I have been involved in the liquor industry for approximately 38 years," says Nicholas Guttilla, a participant in the project, "either as an Assistant Attorney General assigned to DLLC, or as an attorney representing the [liquor] industry. During that time, many directors have come and gone, however the department's Rules have remained static, until now."

During the rule writing process, which started this past Spring, Oliver has held six public Title 4 forums throughout Arizona where input is received and, when appropriate, included in the draft Rules. "It's tedious, time consuming and staff intensive on our side," offers Oliver, "but so necessary to the quality outcome we at DLLC are seeking. With so much experience and variety of perspectives at the table, we are eliminating problem aspects of the old rules one word at a time."

"These changes will make the Rules and forms more easily understood by government and industry representatives and the general public," Guttilla says "I appreciate Director Oliver's willingness to approach the daunting task of a complete re-write...with such an open mind and a willingness to adopt appropriate suggestions by a very diverse group of interested participants"

Two unrelated but significant service improvements borne from these discussions are new, statewide liquor law training requirements, and a streamlined liquor license application and annual renewal format. Authorized independent trainers that now conduct mandatory liquor law training courses for DLLC will soon see changes in the required curriculum, testing, and certification they offer. Licensees, managers, and staff who serve and sell liquor will see new web-based testing and data storage requirements. "People who serve and sell alcohol are the same people who check IDs and observe the level of intoxication of their clientele. The new training and testing standards will ensure that all servers are fully informed of Arizona liquor law requirements," says Oliver. "These changes will allow us to verify when and how they were certified."

Oliver concludes, "There is no doubt that Arizona will be a safer, healthier place to live when we've finished this process early next year."