

The Montcalm Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking



MONTCALM COUNTY BUSINESS SUMMIT OF JANUARY 18, 2011 REPORT

Prepared by

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INTRODUCTION

On January 18, 2011 the Montcalm Coalition to Prevent Underage Drinking (MCPUD) held a county wide business summit. Alcohol vendors, civic groups, governmental entities, law enforcement agencies, and others throughout the county were invited to attend the summit. Participants were asked to identify and begin problem solving the concerns they have regarding preventing sales of alcohol to underage youth. The summit was attended by 29 people representing convenience stores, grocery stores, restaurants-bars, golf courses, service organizations (The Moose Lodge), human service agencies, law enforcement, the courts, elected officials from townships and the County Commission, the Michigan Licensed Beverage Association (MLBA), and the Michigan Liquor Control Commission (MLCC). A full list of participants and their affiliations is attached.

Participants identified a list of concerns they face as they attempt to prevent underage youth from obtaining alcohol. The list of concerns was followed with participants identifying a list of possible solutions to the noted concerns. Further, participants decided to hold quarterly meetings to see solutions implemented. The quarterly meetings will be organized and supported by MCPUD members and Life Guidance Wellness & Prevention Services staff.

PLANNING

A planning committee for the summit included representatives from J&H Family Stores, Huckleberry's, MCPUD, MLCC, and Life Guidance Wellness & Prevention Services. The committee mailed out invitations to every alcohol vendor in the county in mid-December. Additionally, invitations were mailed to representatives of the courts, law enforcement agencies, villages, cities, townships, and county commissioners. During the same time, invitations were also hand delivered to each business location. Immediately following the Christmas – New Year holidays, a second round of invitations were mailed and hand delivered to the alcohol vendors.

The Clifford Lake Inn was chosen as the summit location given its central location in the county, its business atmosphere and ability to accommodate participants of varying numbers. Tuesday was chosen specifically in that this day was identified as the most flexible day for many of the alcohol vendors. Millard's Furniture of Stanton donated the use of a 54 inch TV to use for the DVD and PowerPoint programs presented at the summit.

AT THE SUMMIT

The summit consisted of three parts; Setting the Stage, Identifying Concerns, and Identifying Possible Solutions to the noted concerns. During the 'Setting the Stage' portion of the day, participants were in one large group. In the other two portions of the day, participants worked in six small groups ranging from five to seven people per group.

Setting the Stage:

Linda Huckleberry, a restaurant/bar owner, served as moderator of the summit. She provided the welcome and introduced the speakers during the day.

John Kroneck, a prevention specialist with Life Guidance, spoke to the responsibility of adults in setting standards for youth and introduced the video, "A Stone's Throw", a national award winning prevention video produced by FACE, Inc.

Terry Reeves, a manager at J&H Family Stores, presented the view of a business that is highly responsible yet still finds challenges in its day to day experiences.

Barb Subastian, a Regional Manager at the MLCC, presented the philosophy and practices the MLCC incorporates in granting and monitoring licenses to sell alcohol.

Identifying Concerns:

In six small groups, participants discussed the concerns they have regarding alcohol sales to underage youth. These concerns were then shared with the larger group. The following are the concerns identified by the participants.

- A) Need inexpensive employee training particularly for 1st time and seasonal employees.
- B) Need universal, i.e. state wide, store policies that stipulate everyone is checked.
- C) Parental responsibility for their children under 18 years of age. Educate parents that they may be fined for youth behaviors. Help parents with prevention in the home. Get parents involved through both time and money responsibilities.
- D) Should be a limitation on how far back offenses may be held against a business. Currently two offenses fourteen years apart are treated similar to two offenses in the same year.
- E) Who is responsible regarding 3rd party sales? Particularly on a golf course, the entire course cannot be monitored. Where does the responsibility and liability lay?
- F) New technology could be very helpful. Smaller businesses, however, do not have the funds to upgrade equipment. Is there anyway to help those who need a little help?
- G) There is a lack of "call lists" so that vendors can work together and let each other know when there are underage youth attempting to purchase alcohol in the area.
- H) Fines for youth vs. retailers are not equitable. Youth should be held more accountable than they currently are for attempting to purchase alcohol. The penalties should be at least as tough for the youth as they are for the businesses.
- I) More needs to be done regarding 'shared server responsibility'. The last business serving should not bear the burden of actions of those before it regarding serving an individual.
- J) Youth need to be educated on consequences of attempting to purchase alcohol.
- K) For those businesses that repetitively sell alcohol to minors, they should lose their license to sell alcohol. (The law states if an establishment sells three times within a two year period they loose their license for a period of time.)
- L) What are the retailers' options when a youth attempts to purchase alcohol? It is clear what their options are when shoplifting occurs but not clear when a youth attempts to illegally purchase alcohol. Is it within the business owner's options to prosecute, take the ID, detain the youth, etc.?
- M) One difficulty law enforcement faces is that businesses do not contact law enforcement when a youth attempts to purchase alcohol. If they contacted law enforcement, more could be done by the local law enforcement agency.

An additional topic regarding fake ID's also took place. Chief Dood of the Village of Lakeview, demonstrated a black light pen that may be purchased for approximately \$10. The black light picks up a hologram of the State of Michigan seal on the license, including over the picture.

Identifying Possible Solutions:

For the purpose of organizing the identified concerns so they could be addressed in an effective manner, the concerns were grouped into three areas. These areas are 'Employee Items', 'Enforcement-Fines Items', and 'General Items'. Participants worked in six small teams. Each of the noted items were addressed by two teams.

To begin identifying possible solutions, a few minutes was set aside for each individual to identify what solutions they could identify. Next, each individual had a chance to share his/her solutions within the respective small group. After each member of the respective group had shared their solutions, each group chose the top three to five solutions to share with the large group. The following are the solutions, presented per area, generated by the participants.

Employee Items;

- 1) Helping employees understand that should they sell alcohol to a minor even once they will be terminated.
- 2) The availability of affordable and convenient employee training, such as TIPS or TAM. Could there be a Montcalm County training site?
- 3) Would like to see a representative from the retail sector as a member of the LCC Board.
- 4) Employees should have equitable fines with respect to what the business must pay. Currently it is \$100 for the employee and \$1,000 for the business.

Enforcement/Fines Items;

- 1) Better communication between the LCC and local law enforcement around compliance checks results.
- 2) A youth who attempts to purchase should be ineligible for driver's license application until 18 years of age. Second offense until 21 years of age.
- 3) Increase the fines to minors (and their parents) to \$500 1st offense, \$1,000 2nd offense – with community service for each offense.
- 4) Parents should receive the penalties with their youth.
- 5) The youth attempting to buy should have his/her driver's license taken away on the spot.
- 6) Increase the punitive fine to the employee who sells alcohol to a minor.
- 7) Three strikes – If a business sells alcohol to a minor on three occasions within 10 years they should loose their license to sell alcohol for a period of time.

General Items;

- 1) Create a business phone tree to inform fellow businesses of an underage youth attempting to purchase alcohol as well as other items important to the businesses.
- 2) Standardize the equipment and procedures used by all businesses throughout the County.
- 3) Provide grants for smaller businesses to afford new equipment to check identification.
- 4) Institute a marketing campaign focused on adults and the penalties to providing alcohol to minors.

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- 5) Create a statewide data base of offenders. The data base would work with identification used to purchase alcohol.
- 6) Promote the benefits of not using alcohol – i.e. health, safety (falls, etc.), a drop in violence, driving statistics, brain development, etc.
- 7) Establish a call list on www.montcalm.org
- 8) Change attitudes
 - a. For youth
 - i. Its cool not to drink.
 - ii. Not all kids drink.
 - b. For adults
 - i. Youth use of alcohol is not a “right of passage” – don’t expect it.
- 9) Expand communication and general education at the local level.

Additionally, a possible solution that runs through all the areas is that of advocating for a change in legislation. This is primarily pertinent to fines for the employees, and youth and their parents when the youth attempts an illegal purchase. Advocacy includes a local organized group of people/businesses that shares common goals and ongoing relationships with elected officials.

MOVING FORWARD

At the closing of the summit, participants decided to meet on a quarterly basis to follow up on the ideas generated during the summit. The meeting time and place will be coordinated with the assistance of the MCPUD staff. Additionally, a draft version of the report has been sent to all participants for their review, comments, and noted changes to create the final report.

MEASURES OF SUCCESS

During the planning phase of the Summit, the planning committee identified three measures to gauge the success of the Summit. Each of the measures and outcomes are identified below.

- 1) Measure: If 35 or more people attend the Summit.
Outcome: There were 35 people who registered for the Summit and 29 who participated in the day. The weather may have been a factor in attendance in that schools were closed due to weather concerns on this day. It is also felt that more personal invitations from fellow business owners and managers would have generated more interest in the business community.
- 2) Measure: Develop community approaches to deal with concerns.
Outcome: As can be seen in the report, 20 ideas were generated to address the identified concerns. These will need to be prioritized in subsequent meetings.
- 3) Measure: Plan for continued activity – perhaps electronic network.
Outcome: Participants have committed to quarterly meetings to follow through on the items generated at the Summit. Drug Free Montcalm shall work with the Business Coalition to support and assist the desired activities.

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Although not attended as well as planned, the items identified to address concerns are significant. In addition, following through on the ideas, through quarterly meetings, is also a significant commitment. Further, the planning committee has heard positive comments regarding the Summit, the way it was run and the items covered during the day. As such, DFM considers this initial effort a success. As a qualifier, it is understood that follow through will be critical to realize actual progress from this effort.

BUSINESS SUMMIT ATTENDEES

The following individuals were present at the Summit. Everyone except J. Kroneck, who was the principle facilitator of the process, participated in generating the lists of concerns and possible solutions. That is, other Summit leaders also participated in the group processes.

Name	Business/ affiliation	Title
Barb Subastian	Michigan Liquor Control Commission	Regional Manager
Darin Dood	Lakeview Police	Police Chief
Kristi Jeffrey	8th Circuit Court	Drug Court Coordinator
Steve DeWitt	Howard City Police	Police Chief
Norma Sower	United Lifestyles	Community Programs Coordinator
Jenny Cordray	J & H Family Stores	Store Manager
Terry Reeves	J & H Family Stores	Store Manager
John Johansen	Montcalm County Board of Commissioners	Commissioner
Trent Schroeder	Brookside Golf Course	Owner
Patti Hoskins	J & H Family Stores	Store Manager
Shannon Johnson	J & H Family Stores	District Manager
Donna Orwig	J & H Family Stores	Store Manager
Tom Lindeman	Montcalm County Board of Commissioners	Commissioner
James Armstrong	Greenville Moose Lodge	Administrator
Carl Paepke	Montcalm County Board of Commissioners	Commissioner
Robin Beyers	Spot Party Store	Manager
Ransom Leppink	Leppink's Food Center	Owner
Lesleigh Noakes	Leppink's Food Center	Store Director
Ed Hansen	Pine Township Supervisor	Supervisor
Peter Broderick	Michigan Licensed Beverage Association	Director of Communications
Linda Huckleberry	Huckleberry's Restaurant	Owner
Betty Kullenberger	Montcalm County Board of Commissioners	Commissioner
Cheryl Thelen	Mid Michigan District Health Department	Health Educator
Dave Wills	Leppink's Food Center	Store Manager
Marsha Boyer	The Little Store	Owner
Scot Jensen	Clifford Lake Inn	Bar Tender
Sadie Stokes	Clifford Lake Inn	
Patti Warmington	Life Guidance Wellness & Prevention	Division Director
John Kroneck	Life Guidance Wellness & Prevention	County Coordinator
L Quinn Lincoln	Drug Free Montcalm	Coalition Coordinator