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For questions or more information please contact:

Lauren Greenfield
Red Rock Regional Prevention Coordinator
90 North 31st Street
Clinton, OK 73061
(580)323-9736
laureng@red-rock.com

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One Store Sell Alcohol to a Minor in Western Oklahoma

On June 23rd, 2014, the Regional Prevention Coordinator (RPC) in conjunction with the ABLE Commission conducted 13 alcohol compliance checks throughout Elk City and Clinton. Through the compliance checks, 1 out of 13 stores sold to a minor.

Each fiscal year the RPC conducts 100 or more Alcohol Compliance Checks throughout the cities of Beckham, Blaine, Caddo, Custer, Dewey, Greer, Kiowa, Roger Mills and Washita counties. A strict protocol is followed in completing Alcohol Compliance Checks. A staff member of the RPC enters a retail store to ensure safety before the minor enters. The minor enters the retail stores without acknowledging the RPC staff and attempts to purchase alcohol using their drivers license which clearly states their date of birth. The minor provides cash that has been tagged by local law enforcement to the retailer to purchase the alcohol. If a sale is denied the minor leaves the retail store immediately. However, if a sale is complete the minor exits the store and hands the alcohol to law enforcement. At that time the law enforcement officer educates the retailer about the law surrounding underage drinking and selling to minors. Alcohol Compliance Checks can be very useful in allocating scarce enforcement and prevention resources.

In lieu of the alcohol sales to minors, Red Rock RPC is going to be offering a FREE Responsible Beverage Service and Sales (RBSS) training to alcohol retailers this spring. The training will educate store owners and clerks about laws regarding alcohol sales to minors as well as how to properly check an i.d.

According to National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, "each year, approximately 5,000 young people under the age of 21 die as a result of underage drinking; this includes about 1,900 deaths from motor vehicle crashes, 1,600 as a result of homicides, 300 from suicide, as well as hundreds from other injuries such as falls, burns, and drowning." For this reason, underage drinking prevention strategies such as alcohol compliance checks are initiated throughout the state in hopes of reducing sales to minors that lead to death and injury.

The RPC is funded through the Oklahoma Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services and are required to conduct a specific number of these checks each fiscal year. For more information regarding Alcohol Compliance Checks or RBSS Training please contact Lauren Greenfield at (580)323-9736.