

Liquor license checklist getting good reception

By Ben McCall

ben.mccall@wahoonepaper.com

WAHOO – After seven months of use, a new liquor license checklist in Saunders County is already getting good marks.

Saunders County has put into place additional requirements for applicants wishing to gain liquor licenses. The county's requirements, which went into effect this February, are above and beyond what the State of Nebraska requires.

One of the county's new process requires a checklist that is done with the Saunders County Board of Supervisors and the Saunders County Sheriff's office.

The new liquor license process involves the Saunders County Sheriff's Office handling the processing of all special designated liquor licenses. Once the sheriff's office reviews the application, the sheriff's office will report to Saunders County Board of Supervisors, indicating if the application has met all the minimum requirements.

These requirements are to assure the county that no alcohol is being served to minors, no outside alcohol is brought in, a fence is made to prevent passing of alcohol, two off-duty law enforcement officers are present, distinct containers for the alcohol are provided, sales are restricted to only two drinks per customer; and routes for emergency vehicles are provided.

Saunders County Sheriff, Kevin Stukenholtz said the checklist has been good because it opens up communication.

"It opens communication with the vender, the county board and the sheriff office," Stukenholtz said. "Going to the county board gives a

chance for input and to give ideas of possible safety issues."

Such problems could lead to issues with parking, bathrooms or even rain during the event.

The sheriff said it was good to have answers in place to potential problems before an event takes place.

According to Saunders County Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Doris Karloff, that was one of the intents of the new process. She said the idea is to promote safety within the county.

Stukenholtz stated the county held similar regulations before the checklist and the patrons of local establishments as well as the vendors are fairly familiar with the new regulations.

The requirement for two off-duty law enforcement officers also hasn't been a burden for local law enforcement, according to Stukenholtz.

"Anytime with special events, there is a potential for extra work," Stukenholtz said. "I would prefer to prepare ahead of time."

Stukenholtz recently presented the progress of the new licensing process at a Project Extra Mile meeting.

Project Extra Mile supported the new process, primarily to prevent minors obtaining alcohol and to prevent local businesses from receiving legal repercussions.

"I think it is great addition, it would be wonderful if the other towns would adopt something similar and everyone is on the same page," said Mary Tingelhoff, the Community Liaison of Dodge, Saunders and Washington counties. "It's a way to prevent minors from obtaining alcohol."