



# Success Stories

Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

June 2005

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## End to BYOB on City Property

City leaders in Fremont, Nebraska recently acted to end a longstanding tradition of “bring your own booze” to events held on city property. Their action was taken in response to increasing complaints about underage drinking and intoxicated persons at receptions, reunions, and other celebrations held at city-owned facilities. Further, they were concerned that the lack of strict policies regarding alcohol use on municipal property would eventually lead to tragedy.

In the past, Fremont residents who rented city facilities to host receptions or other celebrations had been allowed to bring their own beer and other alcoholic drinks onto city property to serve guests without a liquor license. Although State law allows such activity as long as alcohol is not sold and the event is not open to the public, city leaders feared that it was just a matter of time before someone was injured. Fremont Parks and Recreation Director Ken Walter said there were no rules in place to prevent minors from consuming alcohol or to keep someone who was legally intoxicated from having another drink. “As city leaders, we wanted to protect the city’s youth. In addition, the issue of liability was a valid concern,” said Walter.

Walter turned to Project Extra Mile, a statewide underage drinking prevention organization, for advice regarding the city’s options. Diane Riibe, executive director of Project Extra Mile, worked with Walter and the Fremont Parks and Recreation Board to develop a new set of guidelines to require the following:

- A special designated liquor license for all events held on city property and approved by the Fremont City Council and the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission.
- Service of alcoholic beverages only through a licensed caterer, a nonprofit organization, or an onsite retailer.
- Security hired by event holders and approved through the Fremont Police Department.
- A refundable deposit of \$200 to \$1,500, depending upon the number of people expected at the event, paid by event holders.

The Parks and Recreation Board presented the proposal to the Fremont City Council in May 2005. Although there was some concern that the new rules would negatively impact the number of rentals, the city council voted unanimously to adopt the new regulations, which became effective immediately.

“The new policy may inconvenience some, but the health and safety benefit to young people and families far outweighs any inconvenience,” Riibe said. “The new policy gives the city some much needed protection against those who illegally provide alcohol to minors as well as those who are intoxicated and may cause injury to others.”

**For more information, contact Diane Riibe, Executive Director, Project Extra Mile, 402-963-9047 or [diane@projectextramile.org](mailto:diane@projectextramile.org)**