



Advocating for evidence-based policies and practices
to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms.

OMAHA COALITION MEETING
Wednesday, December 14, 2022
9 a.m.

A G E N D A

- I. Welcome and Introductions
- II. Review of the November 9, 2022 Meeting Minutes
(please contact PEM staff with corrections)
- III. Looking back at 2022
- IV. Additional Discussion/Announcements
- V. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date: **January 18th, 9 a.m.**
UNO's Community Engagement Center, Room 230

IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS

Nebraska Liquor Control Commission Hearings – January 4 & 5, 2023

The mission of Project Extra Mile is to advocate for evidence-based policies
and practices to prevent and reduce alcohol-related harms.

PROJECT EXTRA MILE

OMAHA METRO AREA COALITION MEETING MINUTES November 9, 2022

- I. Call to Order: Chris Wagner called the meeting to order at 9 a.m.
- II. Welcome and Introductions: Welcome and introductions took place. Coalition members in attendance: Greg McVey, Sharona Crittenden, Palistene Gray-Moore, Margie Magnuson, Lorelle Mueting, Nick Jeanette, Jeremy Leifeld, Nathan Jacobsen, Tom Safranek, Sophia Lopez, Karl Meister, Officer Derrick, Don Hoes, Leah Casanave, Jordan Cedillo, and Alvin McCruel. Coalition members in attendance via Zoom: Lanette Richards, Brian Woods, and Zack Hicks. Staff members: Chris Wagner, Beatha Kliewer, Liene Topko, and Summer Woolsey.
- III. Approval of Minutes: The minutes from the October 12th meeting were included in the coalition meeting packet. No additions or corrections were made.
- IV. Lessons Learned from the NLEEA Conference: Inv. Nathan Jacobsen, Nebraska State Patrol – Troop H, shared lessons learned from his attendance at the National Liquor Law Enforcement Association’s conference. He discussed information about the importance collaboration with community members and other agencies to achieve positive outcomes.

Chris Wagner inquired about the penalties and implications of some party buses continuing to operate without a liquor license. Stricter policies and enforcement need to be established to hold businesses accountable to ensure minors are not drinking on board and getting hurt. Another topic of conversation was alcohol delivery and the need to implement operations to ensure delivery services are also following the law.

Dr. Tom Safranek inquired about procedures following an alcohol-involved crash and whether businesses can be held accountable for this. Law enforcement in the room explained that biggest hurdle in this is the need to have proof ‘beyond a reasonable doubt,’ but Wagner noted that the burden of proof for the Liquor Control Commission is lower than that of a court of law.

- V. Focus Area Updates
 - a. Local
 - i. Liene Topko shared that PEM provided comments to the Lincoln City Council regarding the sale of alcohol at Pinnacle Bank Arena for Husker basketball games. The Council unanimously approved the measure.
 - b. Policy
 - i. Chris Wagner informed the coalition that PEM has been invited to be a part of Omaha’s Vision Zero Task Force Advisory Committee which will focus on reducing motor vehicle crash fatalities in the city.
 - ii. Wagner also updated the group on educational meetings that have been held with legislative staff. He shared more meetings will be scheduled in

the coming weeks with senator-elects to help them understand the excessive alcohol consumption problem in our state and offer to be a resource for them as alcohol policies are considered during the session.

c. Youth

- i. Summer Woolsey outlined the skills youth will work to improve as a part of PEM's Youth Leadership Council and Network. She also shared that PEM has established a Youth Leadership Scholarship to be awarded to one student each spring based on their participation in the groups.
 1. Chris Wagner added that Share Omaha's Giving Tuesday is on November 29th and the funds raised there toward the youth scholarship will be matched by prior donations.
- ii. The Youth Leadership Council and Network will meet on December 12th at 7:00 PM at UNO's Community Engagement Center.

d. Awareness

- i. Liene Topko summarized the op-ed PEM submitted to the Omaha World-Herald regarding the inclusion of alcohol at community events. One of the biggest concerns is the lack of knowledge of the alcohol and cancer link and that the Pediatric Cancer Foundation is partnering with breweries to raise money for research.
- ii. The November Research Summary is available at www.projectextramile.org/ResearchSummary

VI. Additional Discussion/Announcements: none

VII. Adjournment and Next Meeting Date: The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m. The next meeting will take place at the UNO Community Engagement Center at 9 a.m. on Wednesday, December 14th, 2022.



RESEARCH SUMMARY
Date Compiled: December 2022

Key takeaways from included research:

- A Finnish study assessed predictive associations of age of first drink, first intoxication, frequency of intoxication, and self-reported alcohol tolerance at age 15-16 with self-harm requiring medical attention or suicide by age 33. They found high alcohol tolerance, age of onset, and frequency of intoxication to be significant predictors of self-harm and suicide.
- Researchers in California examined estimated levels of total alcohol use per capita and how this compares to child abuse and neglect. They determined that higher estimated volume of alcohol use among young adults (age 18-29) was related to more children being entered into foster care resulting from alcohol-related concerns. They emphasized that reducing alcohol availability by decreasing outlet density could reduce child abuse and neglect in neighborhoods.
- A study was conducted to examine the association between implementation of state recreational cannabis laws (RCLs) and alcohol use among adults. They concluded that there may be an association in the US between recreational cannabis laws and increased alcohol use, particularly among younger adults and men.
- A study of US women assessed effects of different pandemic-related concerns and increased alcohol use. Researchers found concerns about isolation, job/finances, and concerns about the government to be significantly related to reporting increased alcohol use. Studies like this can be utilized to prepare advanced public health interventions to minimize alcohol-related harm among women.
- Due to limited understanding of alcohol policies on lifetime abstinence, a study was conducted to assess the association of International Alcohol Control (IAC) policies and lifetime abstinence. The assessment results suggested that restricting alcohol marketing could be a key policy for to protect alcohol abstinence in high- and middle-income countries.
- Researchers assessed electronic medical records of individuals who reported having alcohol dependence, nicotine dependence, or both (co-users) and how this affected health outcomes following COVID-19 infection. They found that risk for requiring ventilation, developing pneumonia, and mortality within 30 days of diagnosis increased with any substance use history. This study builds upon previous research indicating increased risk of disease following COVID-19 infection as a result of substance use.

Americans Overwhelmingly Support Auto Technology that Stops Drunk Drivers, New Ipsos Survey Shows

Written by Mothers Against Drunk Driving Staff

Law Backed by MADD that Mandates Impaired Driving Prevention Technology Passed One Year Ago Today

WASHINGTON, Nov. 15, 2022 /PRNewswire-PRWeb/ -- A new Ipsos poll shows that 9 out of 10 Americans support technology that is integrated into a car's electronics to prevent drunk driving. The new poll results come one year after the bipartisan HALT Act was signed into law as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The law gave the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) three years to establish an auto safety standard for all new cars that detects and prevents impaired driving.

91% of respondents said the technology is a good or very good idea. Support for the technology spans gender, age, income and regional differences. The most common factor that influences support for impaired driving prevention technology in all new cars is cost, according to the poll commissioned by Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). 78% of respondents said they are much more or somewhat more likely to support the technology if it comes at no extra cost to consumers.

"MADD agrees that safety should not just be a luxury for people who can afford to pay for it," said MADD National President Alex Otte. "Advanced, passive technology that prevents impaired driving should be as standard as seatbelts and airbags – not an upcharge and not an option. There's a crisis on our roads, and every month we wait to get this technology on all new cars means more than 1,000 preventable deaths and 25,000 preventable injuries caused by drunk driving."

The bipartisan HALT Act, led by Congresswoman Debbie Dingell in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senator Ben Ray Lujan in the U.S. Senate, sets the three-year timeframe for NHTSA to identify the new auto safety standard, then gives auto makers another two to three years to implement it. The three-year timeline began on November 15, 2021. Victims and survivors of impaired driving were the driving force behind the legislation, with strong support from MADD, traffic safety partners, leading alcohol companies and 13 top insurance companies.

"We have the technology now to stop drunk driving, and every day we fail to implement it, more lives are lost to preventable tragedy," said Congresswoman Dingell. "I'm proud that a year ago, we passed this critical priority as a part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. It is beyond time we made sure it is implemented in vehicles and start saving lives."

According to the Ipsos poll, 82% of respondents support or somewhat support the Congressional mandate for drunk driving prevention technology in all new cars, up from 77% before the law passed last year.

"Today, I'm honored to mark one year since the HALT/RIDE Act was signed into law, paving the way for safer roads and streets in New Mexico and across our country. As a survivor of a drunk driving crash, I'm proud this initiative will save lives each year and prevent families from receiving that painful phone call of losing a loved one," said Senator Lujan. "As we celebrate this anniversary and the progress we've made, we will continue our momentum and work with

Secretary Buttigieg and NHTSA to fully implement this law so that no more families know the pain of losing a loved one to drunk or impaired driving."

In the one year since the HALT Act was signed into law, an independent Technical Working Group was formed to explore potential technologies that could meet the law's requirement. The Technical Working Group is co-chaired by Stephanie Manning, Chief Government Affairs Officer at MADD, and Dr. Jeffrey Michael, Distinguished Scholar at the Johns Hopkins Center for Injury Research and Policy and former Associate Administrator at NHTSA.

The push for the new auto safety standard received a powerful endorsement in September, when the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) issued a strong statement of support for in-vehicle alcohol-detection technology and exploration of other technologies such as driver monitoring. According to the Ipsos poll, 58% of respondents said they were more likely to support passive drunk driving prevention technology in all new cars if the NTSB endorsed it.

"It's no mystery: we know how to eliminate impaired driving and save thousands of lives every year. What we lack is the will to implement proven solutions," said NTSB Chair Jennifer Homendy. "The cost of inaction is unacceptable, which is why the NTSB continues to push for alcohol impairment detection systems in all new vehicles, among other lifesaving measures."

Every 45 minutes in the U.S., a person dies in a drunk driving crash and every 2 minutes a person is injured. MADD has launched a landing page on madd.org with a countdown until the impaired driving prevention standard deadline is met.

The campaign calls attention to thousands of preventable deaths and injuries from alcohol-related crashes since November 15, 2021: the day President Biden signed the historic legislation into law. MADD is urging the public to visit the website and follow simple instructions to ask their U.S. Senators and Representatives to ensure USDOT meets the three-year deadline mandated by the law.

According to the highly respected Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, more than 9,400 deaths could be prevented annually by making impaired driving prevention technology standard in every new car. Countless injuries could also be prevented.

While America's seven consecutive quarters of traffic fatality increases appeared to reverse course in the second quarter of this year, according to data from NHTSA, the big picture remains unacceptable: Traffic fatalities are still dramatically higher than they were a decade ago. As U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg has stated, we are facing "a national crisis of fatalities and serious injuries."

About the Ipsos Survey

The poll was conducted October 28-30, 2022, by Ipsos using its KnowledgePanel®. This poll is based on a nationally representative probability sample of 1,030 general population adults age 18 or older, with a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.1 percentage points at the 95% confidence level.

2022 is on track to be deadliest of recent years on Nebraska roads

Written by NTV News Staff

LINCOLN, Neb. — 2022 is on track to become one of the deadliest on Nebraska roads.

According to the Nebraska Department of Transportation, 10 people have died on state roads so far in November as of Tuesday morning.

This year, 231 people have died, which is the most at this point of the year in the last five years.

For comparison, for the entire year in 2020, there were 233 traffic deaths.

The deadliest year on state roads in the past decade was in 2019, when 248 died.

Group hoping to tackle traffic safety in Omaha while remembering traffic death victims

Written by Marlo Lundak

OMAHA, Neb. (WOWT) - If you drive on Dodge St. near UNO, you may notice a new, bright yellow sign on the pedestrian bridge that reads #SafeStreetsSaveLives.

It's placed just a block away from where a pregnant woman was hit and killed while crossing the road in September.

"We're trying to put a spotlight on our road traffic victims in Omaha," says Matt Wayne with Mode Shift Omaha on Sunday.

Wayne and others gathered at the pedestrian bridge Sunday to share a message about safety on the roads.

It comes on the World Day of Remembrance for Traffic Road Victims.

The local organization also has a goal.

"The city adopted a Vision Zero program in 2017, and right now they follow it on a volunteer basis, we would like to see some of those policies implemented as a permanent part of our infrastructure to create safer streets," Wayne says.

Wayne says this year, Omaha is at a seven-year high for pedestrian traffic deaths with 10.

The crashes impact family after family, like Dale and Dillon Shuman, who lost their daughter and sister Jerica in a pedestrian hit-and-run crash at 75th and Maple earlier this month.

"Sometimes I have to remind myself to breathe because it just doesn't feel real," Dale told 6 News.

The Vision Zero strategy is a goal to eliminate traffic deaths in Omaha, and around the country, too.

As part of the plan, in April, the city made changes to the Blackstone district following a series of serious and fatal pedestrian crashes.

"These changes are 100% about improving public safety, which is our number one responsibility," Mayor Jean Stothert said at the announcement of the pedestrian safety pilot project in the area.

Sunday, Stohert signed a proclamation recognizing the World Day of Remembrance, which states the vision zero action plan will be finished next year.

Matt Wayne hopes to see that happen.

"Holding the city accountable for their Vision Zero program is important," he says. "It's about setting policy for safety over speed because speed is the leading indicator of if someone gets severely injured or killed in a crash."

Consumer groups obtain TTB commitment to issue rulemakings on mandatory alcohol labeling

Written by Center for Science in the Public Interest Staff

A coalition of consumer groups today announced an important victory for the American public: the Treasury Department's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) has agreed to issue proposed rules requiring standardized alcohol content, calorie, and allergen labeling on all beer, wine and distilled spirits products. TTB also agreed to begin preliminary rulemaking on mandatory ingredient labeling.

TTB's decision comes after three national consumer organizations – the Center for Science in the Public Interest, Consumer Federation of America, and the National Consumers League – sued TTB on October 3, 2022, for failing to act on a 2003 petition to require alcohol labeling with the same basic transparency consumers expect for non-alcoholic beverages and food products. CSPI's litigation department filed the complaint on behalf of the three organizations in the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

Based on evidence that alcohol is a significant source of empty calories and increases the risk of certain cancers, alcohol use disorders, traffic accidents, and severe injuries, the 2003 petition specifically called for listing the amount of alcohol and calories per serving, the percent alcohol by volume, the serving size, the number of standard drinks per container, and other needed information to make fully informed drinking decisions. These consumer groups also petitioned for an ingredients listing on all alcoholic beverages, something that is a standard feature for other food products and particularly important to those with allergies or other chemical sensitivities.

As a result of the lawsuit, TTB committed to publishing three rulemakings covering mandatory nutrient and alcohol content labeling, mandatory allergen labeling, and mandatory ingredient labeling within the next year.

In addition to the lawsuit, the groups applauded the House and Senate Appropriations Committee for including report language in the FY23 Financial Services and General Government bill urging the agency to take action on this critical rule.

"This is a groundbreaking day for consumers," said Sally Greenberg, Executive Director of the National Consumers League. "Consumer advocates have been trying for 19 years to get this far. Now there is light at the end of the tunnel. We thank the TTB for finally taking this action and look forward to working closely with the agency, the industry, and other consumer advocates to make sure this is done right and that consumers are the winners."

"All we have requested over these two long decades is the kind of information that consumers expect when purchasing other foods and beverages," said Peter Lurie, Executive Director of the Center for Science in the Public Interest. "We hope TTB can move quickly on this long overdue action."

"Better labeling requirements for alcoholic beverages will allow consumers to make more informed decisions," said Thomas Gremillion, Director of Food Policy at Consumer Federation of America. "Consumers have a right to consistent, reliable, and relevant information about the products they buy. For too long, the alcohol industry has kept consumers in the dark, and TTB's announcement is an important step forward."

The 2003 citizen petition was submitted to the Treasury Department by CSPI, CFA, and NCL and a coalition of 66 other organizations and eight individuals, including four deans of schools of public health.

Public Pulse: Alcohol only adds to problems

Written by Betty Schmelzer, Lincoln

In the Nov. 6 Journal Star was an article stating 1 in 8 deaths among Nebraskans age 20 to 64 is related to alcohol.

Chris Wagner said, "I think it's not shocking, sadly, when you look at our state. We're really typically in the top-five worst for binge-drinking states in the country. ... Alcohol is relatively cheap, and it's pretty much everywhere."

Adding to this problem, our tax-supported university system has let the lure of money override common sense and proposes to sell liquor at some sporting events.

Sports are supposed to be healthy, body-and-mind-building activities establishing clean, living and sportsmanship. A great thing for everyone, especially youth.

Aren't we sending a mixed message to our kids?

In an earlier Journal Star story from Nov. 4 university police were beefing up security because of students violating rules against alcohol and bad behavior at football games.

In my opinion, alcohol does not enhance the enjoyment of spectator sports.

It instead leads to consequences in public safety and health. Excessive use of alcohol does not equate to Nebraska and the good life.

Sutton man ordered to pay fines for charges related to deck collapse

Written by NTV News Staff

FILLMORE COUNTY, Neb. — A Sutton man has been ordered to pay \$3,000 in fines for charges related to a deck collapse at a pool party that injured multiple people in July 2021.

According to Fillmore County Court records, Cameron Kleinschmidt-Rouse, 21, was ordered to pay \$750 in fines on each of four counts of procuring/selling alcohol to a minor.

In August, Kleinschmidt-Rouse, 21, pleaded guilty to the charges. In exchange for his plea, prosecutors dismissed four additional counts of contributing to the delinquency of a minor.

On July 5, 2021, Clay County Emergency Manager Tim Lewis said multiple 911 calls were made just after midnight. Callers said a second story deck had collapsed at a home on the 200 block of Road D in Fillmore County.

Officials said a DJ working the pool party reported he was playing music when people rushed up on the deck with him. He reported it collapsed under the surge of the crowd.

This led to a mass casualty plan being activated. A total of 17 people were transported by ambulance to regional hospitals for treatment.

Lewis said Sutton Fire had to use extrication equipment to clear some of the debris from the deck to access and transport one patient. He said many others were transported in private vehicles.

Responders estimated more than 200 people were at the party.

According to a search warrant affidavit as part of the investigation dated July 23, 2021, when Fillmore County Sheriff's Deputies arrived on scene, they located numerous individuals walking around the yard. Multiple empty bottles, beer cans and cups of liquor were located at the scene.

Deputies were eventually directed to Kleinschmidt-Rouse, who was identified as the "promoter" of the party. Kleinschmidt-Rouse reportedly told deputies that when a certain song came on, everyone at the party got on the deck and jumped until it collapsed.

Kleinschmidt-Rouse said a second male was responsible for verifying the ages of the party's attendees and that no one under the age of 21 was to be admitted. However, in an interview with the attendees, deputies determined IDs were not checked and that only seven of the 57 identified attendees who were contacted were age 21 or older.

According to the affidavit, deputies spoke with three attendees who said they were told about the party as it was "being advertised all over social media."

In an interview with another party attendee, deputies were told entry to the party was free for female attendees and \$5 for male attendees. However, for \$15, attendees would have VIP access to the deck which is where free drinks and food were located. The girl told deputies this is where alcohol could be purchased.

Few Americans are Aware of Links Between Alcohol and Cancer Risk

Written by AACR Staff

PHILADELPHIA – Despite conclusive research that shows that all alcoholic beverages, including wine, increase the risk of many types of cancer, Americans demonstrated low awareness of this risk, and some perceived alcohol as having health benefits, according to results published in *Cancer Epidemiology, Biomarkers & Prevention*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research. Awareness varied significantly for various types of alcohol, the study showed.

“Alcohol is a leading modifiable risk factor for cancer in the United States and previous research has shown that most Americans don’t know this,” said the study’s lead author, Andrew Seidenberg, MPH, PhD, who conducted this research while serving as a Cancer Prevention Fellow at the National Cancer Institute.

Seidenberg cited research that shows that alcohol contributed to an average of more than 75,000 cancer cases and almost 19,000 cancer deaths per year between 2013-2016. All beverage types containing ethanol, such as wine, beer, and liquor, increase cancer risk. To date, seven cancer types have been linked to alcohol consumption, including cancers of the breast, mouth, and colon.

To assess Americans’ awareness of the links between alcohol and cancer, Seidenberg and colleagues analyzed data from the 2020 Health Information National Trends Survey 5 Cycle 4, encompassing survey responses from 3,865 adults. Respondents were asked, “In your opinion, how much does drinking the following types of alcohol affect the risk of getting cancer?” Responses were recorded for wine, beer, and liquor. Further questions assessed the respondents’ awareness of links between alcohol and heart disease. Researchers also asked respondents about their current alcohol intake.

Key findings:

Awareness of the alcohol-cancer link was highest for liquor, with 31.2 percent of U.S. adults being aware of the risk, followed by beer (24.9 percent) and wine (20.3 percent).

Ten percent of U.S. adults said wine decreases cancer risk, while 2.2 percent said beer decreases risk and 1.7 percent said liquor decreases risk.

More than 50 percent of U.S. adults reported not knowing how these beverages affected cancer risk.

U.S. adults who were aware that alcoholic beverages increased heart disease risk had higher adjusted predicted probabilities of being aware of the alcohol-cancer link. Heart disease awareness followed similar patterns to cancer awareness, with 38.9 percent, 36.4 percent, and 25.1 percent of U.S. adults believing that liquor, beer, and wine, respectively, increased heart disease risk.

Older adults demonstrated lower awareness of alcohol as a risk factor for cancer. Among U.S. adults over age 60, 15.7 percent were aware of the risk for wine; 17.8 percent for beer; and 23.7 percent for liquor. By comparison, among U.S. adults aged 18-39, 26.1 percent were aware of the risk for wine; 33.1 percent for beer; and 39.1 percent for liquor. Seidenberg said this may be due to more long-standing drinking habits among older adults.

Drinking status was not associated with awareness, with similar rates for non-drinkers, drinkers, and heavier drinkers.

The authors said the study confirms that many Americans would benefit from further education about the links between alcohol and cancer. Such education would be especially useful given that studies suggesting that wine confers possible health benefits have received significant media attention, they noted.

“All types of alcoholic beverages, including wine, increase cancer risk,” said senior author William M.P. Klein, PhD, associate director of the National Cancer Institute’s Behavioral Research Program. “This study’s findings underscore the need to develop interventions for educating the public about the cancer risks of alcohol use, particularly in the prevailing context of national dialogue about the purported heart health benefits of wine.”

The authors suggested that interventions could include mass media campaigns, cancer warning labels, and patient-provider communications. Tailoring messages to desired audiences could help increase message relevance, Klein said.

“Educating the public about how alcohol increases cancer risk will not only empower consumers to make more informed decisions, but may also prevent and reduce excessive alcohol use, as well as cancer morbidity and mortality,” he said.

The authors noted potential limitations include the unconditional structure of some survey questions; for example, questions about awareness of the alcohol-cancer link were not stratified according to how much a respondent drank. They also noted that some data were collected during the COVID-19 pandemic, when many Americans reported drinking more than usual.

This study was supported by the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences at the National Cancer Institute, a part of the National Institutes of Health.

41 minors cited for alcohol possession in Norfolk, NE

Written by Kim Fickett

NORFOLK, Neb. (KTIV) - A call for a loud, large party in the early morning hours of Friday, Dec. 2 led to the citation of 41 minors.

According to a news release by the Norfolk Police Division, they were called to a residence in the 1300 block of West Park for a party. Upon arrival they found many attending the alcohol party were under the age of 21.

Police cited 41 individuals for minor in possession of alcohol.

The resident of the home, Braxton Lind, 19, of Norfolk, Nebraska, was cited for disturbing the peace.

Norfolk Police were assisted by the Madison County Sheriff's Office and the Nebraska State Patrol.

Hastings man gets prison time for crash that killed two teens

Written by KSNB Local 4 Staff

HASTINGS, Neb. (KSNB) - A Hastings man is heading to prison in connection with a traffic crash that killed two teenagers nearly one year ago.

Adams County District Court Judge Morgan Farquhar sentenced 33-year-old Anthony Pingel to at least 38 years in prison on five separate charges, including two counts of felony manslaughter.

The judge gave Pingel 18 to 20 years for each count of felony manslaughter, one year for each assault charge and 60 days for the DUI along with a fine and six months revocation of his license.

"These sentences will be served consecutively as each crime and each victim deserve their own separate sentence," said Judge Farquhar.

Ahead of his sentencing, he read an apology to the families of the victims.

Back in September, Pingel pleaded no contest as part of a plea deal. He was originally charged with felony motor vehicle homicide, but prosecutors dropped those charges. He also pleaded no contest to two counts of misdemeanor third degree assault and one count of DUI.

The fatal accident happened December 12, 2021 at an intersection just east of Hastings. The teenagers who died in the crash were 16-year-old Victoria Fleming of Superior and 18-year-old Tristen Owens of Hastings.

According to a sheriff's report, Pingel's vehicle was traveling north on Blaine, when it collided with the other car carrying the two victims that was traveling eastbound on 12th Street. When officers responded to the scene, they found the two passengers of the car that was hit, dead. The vehicle carrying the victims was engulfed in flames when emergency crews arrived at the scene. The assault charges are related to injuries suffered by two other passengers riding in the victim's vehicle.

Victoria Fleming's mother, Heidi, spoke after the sentence was read, she spoke briefly how she has been effected by her daughter's death.

"Well it's like, you know this is so hard for me every day," Heidi Fleming said. "You know I'm emotional, depressed, sad, crying. I go to bed crying, wake up. We used to go to church for ten years but when this happened I was mad at God."

During the hearing Pingel read a prepared statement to the court and the victims' families, but Heidi Fleming said a letter is not enough to make up for the loss of a child.

"Pingel wrote us a letter, but it don't matter that's my baby girl that he took away and another one that I'll never get back." Heidi told Local4 News.

Investigator's determined that Pingel was drunk at the time of the accident.

Lincoln County Commissioners extend Sunday alcohol sales hours

Written by Jon Allen

NORTH PLATTE, Neb. (KNOP) -The Lincoln County Commissioners passed a resolution to extend Sunday alcohol sales hours to align with the rest of the week.

Previously alcohol sales on Sunday weren't permitted until noon, but now they will be allowed to start at 6 a.m. in areas outside of North Platte city limits. North Platte City Council passed an amendment for the city which also extended sales on Sunday to 8 a.m. instead of noon.

The resolution will take effect immediately after being signed by the Commissioners on Monday morning.

"I did have conversation with several servers who work at both establishments outside the city limits and inside the city limits," said District 3 Commissioner Micaela Wuelher, "And they said that having two different sets of rules kind of set them up for failure, so they appreciated us taking this under consideration."

Omaha teen convicted of manslaughter in best friend's death

Written by KETV Staff

OMAHA, Neb. —An Omaha teenager has been convicted in the shooting that killed his best friend.

Court records show Blake Miller, 18, changed his plea to no contest and was then convicted of felony manslaughter.

Tanner Farrell, 18, died after the shooting in Miller's home near 168th and Harrison streets in March.

Prosecutors said the teens were drinking and "messing around" that night when Miller grabbed a rifle, thinking it was unloaded.

Miller's attorney called the shooting a tragic accident.

Miller will be sentenced on Feb. 21, 2023. There is no minimum punishment, but Miller could get up to 20 years in prison.