



The Extra Mile

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

Miles to Go: LCC Cancels License then Reverses Course on Problem Bar in Omaha

City's Good Neighbor Ordinance can help bring bar into compliance

In August of 2020, a Florence neighborhood bar called the Reign Lounge was forced to reapply for its liquor license because of the numerous problems it was causing in the community. Neighboring businesses and citizens complained about the constant noise, violent disturbances, intoxicated patrons in the streets, parking challenges, vomit, used condoms, and urine in the surrounding area. On top of that, the City of Omaha expressed concerns about the drain on police resources and threats to public safety that the bar presented, including the murder of an Army sergeant at the business in 2018.

In the end, the city recommended denial of the liquor license and the Liquor Control Commission (LCC) upheld that recommendation, which forced a sale of the business. A former Reign employee renamed the bar to 3's Lounge and was approved with the condition that the previous owner could not be involved in the business in any way. Unfortunately, problems continued until the former owner showed up at the Liquor Control Commission one day to drop off a payment and paperwork.

By allowing the former owner to do this, the current owner was in violation of a commission order and the LCC voted to cancel the license at its February hearings. Despite an appeal, the cancellation was sustained in March, and it appeared the problems would finally disappear until the bar decided to hire a well-known liquor attorney that does a lot of business before the LCC. In April, the LCC changed course and agreed with the bar's lawyer that it the owner simply made "a stupid mistake." In doing so, the LCC reinstated the license and imposed a [30-day mandatory closure \(no alcohol sales allowed\) and 30 days of suspension \(\\$3,000 fine\)](#) which goes into effect on May 22 – not an insignificant punishment, but not the result the city and neighbors were hoping for. It is hard to imagine what had changed in the LCC's mind between the initial cancellation and first appeal to the second appeal as they had already made that decision twice previously without wavering.

Florence residents have expressed concerns about the LCC's decision to keep 3's Lounge open, especially since police recently respond to gunfire outside of the bar following the LCC's April decision to reinstate its liquor license. Omaha City Council President Pete Festersen expressed disappointment with the decision: "We need to take this very seriously. Owners need to be held accountable for these situations and I think it was a mistake not to uphold the revocation [Sic. – cancellation] today."

3's Lounge Mandatory Closure (may not sell alcohol): May 22nd, 2023,

through June 20th, 2023.

If you are aware of sales during this period, contact the Nebraska State Patrol at (402) 331-3333.

However, the City of Omaha actually has the ability to address problems at 3's Lounge and other licensed establishments throughout the city before serious problems occur. It's often referred to as the "Good Neighbor Ordinance," (Ord. 39471) passed in 2012, and the emphasis is on giving the licensee an opportunity to address and correct problems to reduce problems that are known to be associated with businesses that sell alcohol and are not managed properly. The goal of the ordinance is not to shut down the business permanently but to encourage the business to become a "good neighbor." This process does not touch the liquor license, which only the LCC can suspend, cancel, or revoke. Instead, the city's ordinance regulates whether or not the business is allowed to have customers via the city's land use and zoning powers. Should the city pursue this option, it would send a letter to the business requiring it to clean up its act within 30 days. Ideally, the business addresses the identified concerns and abates the nuisance(s). If it fails to do so, the city then has the option to revoke its certificate of occupancy. It is harder for businesses that sell alcohol to cause problems in the community if they can't legally have customers in their business.

If you have a business in your neighborhood that is causing problems, you can urge your councilperson to use the Good Neighbor Ordinance to require them to clean up their act. To find your councilperson and their email, [click here](#).

24 Omaha Area Businesses Sold Alcohol to Minors

Voodoo Taco in Gretna was cited for its fourth sale in five years

OMAHA, NEB -- Local and state law enforcement agencies conducted compliance checks during the spring months in the Omaha area to ensure that retailers are refusing the sale of alcohol to minors during the prom and graduation seasons.

"The Plattsmouth Police Department is proud to have been a part of this multi-agency effort to reduce youth access to alcohol," said Plattsmouth Police Captain Ryan Crick. "Underage drinking can have unintended tragic consequences. Frequent compliance checks help to ensure that retailers are consistently checking IDs and refusing the sale of alcohol to minors. Our goal is 100 percent compliance, and we look forward to working with local businesses to achieve that."

Overall, 24 (10%) out of 236 businesses checked in Cass, Douglas, Sarpy and Washington counties over the last three months were cited for selling alcohol to minors. A summary sheet of the enforcement results and a full list of businesses checked are available by [clicking here](#).

Five of the businesses cited are facing enhanced penalties due to prior sales to minors within the last four years -- the time frame used by the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission (LCC) to assess penalties. Voodoo Taco in Gretna was cited for its fourth sale to minor in the last five years; however, because one of those sales falls outside of that four-year window, the business is facing up to 5 days of mandatory closure and 20 days of suspension. Had that fourth sale occurred 9 months later, Voodoo Taco would've been facing cancellation, but the LCC has the ability to deviate from its guidelines when it hears this case in order to "ensure the public health, safety, and welfare" [according to its own website](#).

Aldi 42 in Omaha and Kwik Shop in Ralston were cited their second violation within one year; Casey's 1812 for its second violation within two years; and Kwik Shop in Omaha for its second violation within three years. The five businesses face mandatory days of closure (no alcohol sales allowed) and days of suspension, the latter which can be paid off as a fine at \$100 per day according to the [LCC's penalty guidelines](#).

- **Aldi 42, 13215 W Center Rd, Omaha (8/22)** -- facing up to 2 days of mandatory closure and 50 days of suspension;

- **Casey's 1812, 1059 Washington St, Blair (3/22);** -- facing up to 2 days of mandatory closure and 40 days of suspension;
- **Kwik Shop 653, 5929 N 72nd St, Omaha (4/21)** -- facing up to 2 days of mandatory closure and 30 days of suspension;
- **Kwik Shop 672, 5208 S 72nd St, Ralston (12/22)** -- facing up to 2 days of mandatory closure and 50 days of suspension;
- **Voodoo Taco, 21407 Neb Crossing Dr, Gretna (8/19, 12/22)** -- facing up to 5 days of mandatory closure and 20 days of suspension.

The other 19 businesses are facing their first sale to a minor violation within the last four years. If found guilty by the LCC, these businesses could be facing 15-25 days of suspension that they could choose to pay off as a fine at \$50 per day in lieu of suspension. The four businesses listed below had previous sales to minor violations, but they fell outside of the four-year window that the LCC uses for determining progressive penalties:

- **China Place, 661 N 46th St, Omaha (1/09);**
- **Don & Millie's, 4430 Farnam St, Omaha (3/01, 7/01);**
- **Donohue's, 3232 L St, Omaha (6/10);**
- **La Mesa Mexican Restaurant, 11002 Emmet St, Omaha (12/08).**

44 officers from the Bellevue, Blair, La Vista, Omaha, Plattsmouth and Ralston Police Departments; the Douglas and Sarpy County Sheriff's Offices; and the Nebraska State Patrol participated in the enhanced underage drinking enforcement effort.

To report underage drinking or adults providing alcohol to minors, call the statewide tip line at 1-866-Must-B-21 (687-8221). It's anonymous, and it's the right call. Individuals are urged to call 911 to report an underage drinking party in progress.

Heightened enforcements are supported by the Nebraska Department of Transportation - Highway Safety Office as well as the Strategic Prevention Framework - Partnerships for Success and the Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block grants from SAMHSA through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare. NDOT-HSO also funds the tip line. Project Extra Mile helped to coordinate the enforcement efforts.

Youth Leadership Retreat at Mahoney State Park in July

Register before July 17th!



We are looking for students entering 8th to 12th grades next year to join us at Mahoney State Park in July at the **Project Extra Mile Youth Leadership Retreat**. The retreat will take place from July 24-27th.

Award-winning trainer, strategist, and educator Nigel Wrangham will be leading the sessions, which will help students learn how to become leaders in their schools and communities. Wrangham has compared effective community prevention to a relay race, with the batons carried by the runners and walkers as symbols of hope, optimism, and inspiration. "It is the responsibility of those in the community to build momentum for all three," said Wrangham. "Take care of the baton, so that when you pass it on it can go where it needs to go." We're excited to help Nebraska youth find their voice!



The goal of this event is to empower youth with the skills necessary to engage decision-makers and achieve positive change, whether that be in their school, their community or across the state.

To register [click here](#). There are also a limited number of scholarships still available; [click here](#) for the scholarship application. For more information, please contact us at 402-963-9047 or by email at info@projectextramile.org. Thank you for sharing this information with youth and their families!

Doctors Learn About Their Role in Protecting Community Health and Safety

On April 28th CHI Health resident doctors and residents heard from community public health and policy experts about the importance of evidence-based alcohol screenings in preventing alcohol-related harms in their patients (certain cancers, heart disease, etc.) and the larger community (fatal alcohol-impaired traffic crashes, violent crimes, etc.). Evidence-based screenings are endorsed by the [US Preventive Services Task Force](#), the [Community Preventive Services Task Force](#), and many other national and international bodies.

Family resident doctors also heard from former state senator and Chair of the Health and Human Services Committee Sara Howard about the legislative process and why it's critical for healthcare professionals to be involved in public policy. Howard shared that decisions made at the state level impact not only their scope of work but also the environment in which their patients are making decisions that impact patients' health and the problems they are presenting in clinical settings.



Coalition Member Spotlight - Sharona Crittenden

Sharona Crittenden is a Diversion Officer for the Sarpy County Attorney's Office (SCAO) and has been a part of the Coalition since Fall 2017. In her role, she supervises clients referred by the SCAO for screening and acceptance into the voluntary pre-trial Diversion Program. Sharona wants to ensure that people get the mental health and substance abuse help that they need in order to keep themselves and the community safe. "There is nothing better than having the honor of watching someone do the work to grow into a healthier, happier version of themselves," she shared. As a part of the coalition Sharona stays abreast of recent research, legislation, and local issues to use in her work.



Please join us!

Park in Lot E off of Dodge St. across from the Community Engagement Center!

Omaha Metro Coalition Meeting

Wednesday, May 10th
9:00 a.m.

Please join us in person as we welcome

Jolene Rohde
to discuss the state's
Comprehensive Cancer
Control Plan.

Thank you for your involvement!

Meeting Location:

**UNO's Community
Engagement Center**

*6400 University Drive South
Room 127, Omaha, NE
Parking Lot E*

For more information:
(402) 963-9047



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Save the Date

What: June Coalition Meeting with author of *Better, Not Bitter*, Michelle Cowan

When: Wednesday, June 14th, 2023 at 9:00 a.m.

Where: UNO's Barbara Weitz Community Engagement Center, Room 230
6400 University Drive South, Omaha, NE

PROJECT EXTRA MILE 2023 COALITION MEETINGS

JANUARY 18TH
FEBRUARY 8TH
MARCH 8TH
APRIL 12TH
MAY 10TH
JUNE 14TH
NO MEETING IN JULY
AUGUST 9TH
SEPTEMBER 13TH
OCTOBER 11TH
NOVEMBER 8TH
DECEMBER 13TH

LOOKING FORWARD TO CONNECTING WITH YOU IN 2023



MEETINGS HELD AT
UNO'S COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT CENTER
6400 UNIVERSITY DRIVE SOUTH, ROOM 230



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