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ABDI PROMOTES PREVENTION OF UNDERAGE DRINKING DURING PROM AND GRADUATION

Legislators encouraged to get the word out about dangers of underage drinking

SPRINGFIELD, IL – APRIL 2011 – The Associated Beer Distributors of Illinois (ABDI) is again getting the word out about the dangers of underage drinking in a statewide campaign called *Straight Talk About Underage Drinking* targeting the high school prom and graduation season. Beer distributors, educators, and legislators are all part of the effort.

“During prom and graduation time, many teens feel that they should drink as a ‘rite of passage.’ It is imperative that they are educated that this is not true,” said Bill Olson, president of ABDI.

The flyer developed by ABDI is endorsed by the Illinois Principals Association. Since 2002, nearly 325,000 flyers have been delivered to Illinois schools. So far over 73,000 flyers have been delivered this year. The flyers, available in English and Spanish, present information to teens on a variety of topics, including how alcohol slows your heart rate and decreases reflex responses, which greatly affect a person’s ability to drive, to debunking the myths that a cold shower or coffee will sober someone up.

In 2009, alcohol consumption among high school seniors was 13 percent lower than in 2000 and 38 percent lower than what was reported in 1982, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“We believe prevention efforts must continue in order to keep alcohol consumption among minors on the decline,” said Jason Leahy, executive director of the Illinois Principals Association.

For years, ABDI has been raising awareness about responsible drinking among legal age consumers while encouraging teenagers to make the smart choice and not drink alcohol until they reach the legal age of 21 and are better prepared to make informed decisions.

“Our role as a beer distributor goes beyond keeping the store shelves stocked so consumers have choices,” said Olson. “These programs bring teens face-to-face with the realities involved in drinking alcohol and it allows parents and the community to get more involved in protecting their children.”

In addition to *Straight Talk*, ABDI offers *Talking To Teens about Drinking*, a self-titled booklet that promotes parent/child dialogue about underage drinking. ABDI, in partnership with the IPA, has distributed nearly 400,000 booklets to more than 1200 schools throughout Northern, Central and Southern Illinois.

In 2005, *Talking to Teens about Drinking* was named to the Associations Advance America Honor Roll, a national awards competition sponsored by the American Society of Association Executives.

The Associated Beer Distributors of Illinois is a not-for-profit business trade association which represents mostly family-owned independent distributors who provide customized delivery management for all retailers and to ensure products are delivered fresh and efficiently to restaurants, stores, and bars. Distributors are part of Illinois' state-based alcohol regulated system, licensed by the State of Illinois, to ensure that beer is sold only to licensed retailers who in turn are responsible for selling alcohol to adults of legal drinking age. For more information, visit www.abdi.org.

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