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Contact:
Kim Morreale
847-401-8564
kim@morrealepag.com
Jason Maymon
773-573-5900
Jason@morrealepag.com

ABDI PROMOTES UNDERAGE DRINKING PREVENTION DURING THE PROM AND GRADUATION

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

CHICAGO—(May 6, 2008) – 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, teens sometimes feel the need to celebrate and are often times pressured into engaging in underage drinking. This program prepares teenagers to make smart choices when faced with those types of situations,” said Bill Olson, president of ABDI.

So far nearly 60,000 flyers have been distributed, doubling last year’s mark of nearly 30,000. The flyers, available in English and Spanish, present information to teenagers 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 2007, alcohol consumption among high school seniors was 11 percent lower than in 2000 and 36 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 the number of alcohol consumption among minors on the decline,” said Olson.

“Alcohol education is a key element in preventing the consumption of alcohol by our young people,” says Representative Reitz (D-Steeleville). “This prevention effort is a positive step for encouraging underage individuals not to drink alcohol.”

The Straight Talk brochures have been distributed to high schools throughout Illinois, including St. Francis de Sales High School (Chicago), Walther Lutheran High School (Melrose Park), Schlarman High School (Danville) and Oswego High School (Oswego).

“These flyers are a tool for schools to use to raise awareness of the problems related to underage drinking during the prom and graduation season,” said State Representative Kevin Joyce (D-Chicago), who provided flyers to several high schools, including Alonzo Stagg High School (Palos Hills).

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 Illinois Principles Association (IPA) has distributed more than 52,000 booklets to more than 220 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 distributors who provide customized delivery management for all retailers and to ensure products are delivered fresh and efficiently to restaurants, stores and bars. ABDI operates under a 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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