



Success Stories

Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

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Third Time Is A Charm for Keg Tracking in Louisiana!

Keg tracking legislation in Louisiana has been a goal of youth and adult underage drinking prevention advocates for years. One stumbling block in their efforts rested in State law. Legislation such as keg tracking can only be introduced in odd-numbered years. After two unsuccessful attempts in 1999 and 2001, advocates' tenacity finally paid off. SB 140 Keg Tracking was signed into law by Governor Mike Foster on June 5, 2003. This legislation requires that kegs be tagged with an identification number and that retailers collect and maintain information about the keg purchaser (e.g., number of photo identification card issued to the keg purchaser) for not less than six months.

Members of the Louisiana Alliance to Prevent Underage Drinking (LAPUD), a Statewide coalition comprised of government agencies and volunteer organizations, kept keg tracking a priority for seven years. Student clubs, law enforcement, and other concerned citizens throughout the State also supported and publicized the need to enact this measure to reduce access to alcohol.

For three consecutive years, keg tracking was also one of the top recommendations of high school students attending the annual Louisiana Youth Summit to Prevent Underage Drinking. Funded by the Louisiana Highway Safety Commission and the Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control, the summit convenes students from across the State to study the problem of underage drinking and suggest strategies for combating it.

To close the 2003 Summit, student delegates held a media event at the Louisiana State Capitol in order to release their recommendation for keg tracking legislation to the press. Following the press meeting, youth delegates met with legislators from

their respective districts. These legislative meetings and the press release at the capitol were significant in raising awareness about underage drinking in Louisiana.

The Governor's Drinking While Intoxicated (DWI) task force voted to recommend this policy to the governor for his support. Members of the task force include: legislators, criminal justice professionals, and advocacy groups. With its widespread support, the task force was optimistic that legislation would pass even though previous legislative attempts had failed.

Our Point:
Communities and States are successfully changing laws, ordinance regulations, and enforcement practices to reduce underage drinking.

In 2003, the Office of Alcohol and Tobacco Control (OATC) succeeded in providing an important fiscal note that generated even greater support. OATC Commissioner Murphy Painter took the lead on getting the keg tracking policy through committees and signed into law.

Three important lessons learned from the keg tracking experience are evident:

- Policy work takes a long time—don't give up!
- Advocates need skill sets that can apply to various issues.
- Youth are effective advocates.

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