



# Success Stories

Enforcing the Underage Drinking Laws Program

NEWS FROM THE FIELD

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## Take Action Enforcement Makes a Difference in Idaho

The fast-growing City of Boise is home to Boise State University (BSU) and its growing football team and a proactive police department. It had become a place where underage drinking commonly occurred, and bars allowed persons younger than 21 to imbibe. The downtown area of Boise was home to many bars and restaurants and was the central location for BSU students and others to become intoxicated and then shed upon Boise all the consequences of a drunken crowd (i.e., fights, public urination and intoxication, open container violations).

The Boise Police Department (BPD) took proactive steps to engage the community, as well as local bar and restaurant owners, in making the city a safer place to live. An officer met with members of the South East Neighborhood Association (SENA) to allow these community members to voice their concerns about Boise's underage drinking problem. Meetings were also held with BSU students to learn more about their concerns and potential solutions to the problems in downtown Boise.

As a result of these meetings, BPD organized Party Patrols. A team of six officers was convened and utilized tactical operations to surround properties where underage drinking (and other violations) was happening. After the break up of a party, BPD would process a file that included information about the owners and/or renters of the dwelling where the party took place. Property owners were notified when underage drinking violations were found. From these Party Patrols, BPD saw a 30% reduction in consumption citations. BPD also organized a "lock down" where a problematic establishment was entered and cited, as were its illegal patrons. The bar manager

was fired for knowingly allowing underage drinking to occur. The new manager immediately contacted the BPD and wanted assistance to keep the same thing from happening again.

BPD, partnering with Idaho State Police Alcohol Beverage Control (ABC) officers, also engaged in Compliance Checks to determine compliance of bars and restaurants in downtown Boise. Using undercover, underage individuals, BPD determined that the noncompliance rate was almost 50%. Consequently, the police department enacted extensive efforts to provide free merchant education to the bars and restaurants in downtown Boise. The department also contacted Greek organizations at BSU to arrange free training on parties and alcohol. These educational efforts resulted in an 18% reduction in total calls for services related to parties. There also was a 15% decrease in calls specific to loud parties.

In addition to the enforcement operations, the BPD and ABC used media to broadcast the results of their proactive enforcement operations. The publicity brought awareness to the community of the illegality and problem of underage drinking and its consequences. The community was engaged and happy to hear that something was being done to improve the quality of life in Boise.

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*The views expressed in this document do not necessarily represent the views of the Office of Juvenile Justice for Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) or the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center (UDEC) and are solely of the author/source.*

