

The Extra Mile

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

GOING THE DISTANCE: Third Time Is Not a Charm

Tobacco Hut license denied again

Despite previous failures, the Tobacco Hut at 62nd and Ames recently tried a third time to obtain a license to sell liquor in its North Omaha neighborhood, but the Liquor Control Commission denied the application for the third consecutive time.

Churches and community leaders led the charge to [successfully prevent the granting of this liquor license](#). The groups [argued to the Liquor Control Commission](#) that the north-central Omaha neighborhood was already saturated with alcohol outlets, and that the additional traffic expected at the Tobacco Hut presented a hazard to worshipers, particularly young children at the New Rising Star Baptist Church.

Testimony provided by Rev. Portia Cavitt of Clair Memorial United Methodist Church focused on the already high alcohol outlet density in the area -- there are four liquor outlets within four blocks of the proposed site, and 14 within about 2 miles. Research shows that high outlet density can lead to cheaper and more available alcohol, which then leads to excessive drinking and its harms.

Traffic flow also continued to be an issue. The church's parking lot was often used by customers wanting to turn eastbound on Ames. LCC Chairman Bruce Bailey even noted that on a recent trip to the neighborhood to observe the situation, he personally witnessed a vehicle using the church's parking lot.

However, Tobacco Hut and other applicants are not limited in the number of times they can attempt to obtain a license, and that can be an exhausting process for neighbors. Nevertheless, neighborhood associations, churches and local businesses should all be vigilant when new liquor license applications are filed so that they can share their concerns with regulators.

To learn more about the liquor licensing process in Nebraska click [here](#).

You can also receive a copy of our Liquor Licensing 101 ACTION guide by filling out the form [here](#). For more information, please contact us by e-mail at info@projectextramile.org or by phone at **(402) 963-9047**.



Michael Williams was among 20 members from two churches near 62nd Street and Ames Avenue in Omaha who spoke against the granting of a liquor license to a Tobacco Hut at that intersection. Photo: PAUL HAMMEL/OMAHA WORLD-HERALD

MILES TO GO: Appointment of Alcohol Industry to LCC Raises Concerns

Commercial conflicts of interest threaten effective liquor control

The mission of the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission is to "regulate and control the alcoholic beverage industry and beverages within and into the State of Nebraska in an efficient, effective manner **in order to promote the public health, safety, and welfare**" (emphasis added).

That makes the appointment of a former beer distributor to the Commission an issue of serious concern to individuals and organizations working to reduce alcohol-related harm in our state. Appointee Harry Hoch ran a beer distribution business in Grand Island for three decades.

While Governor Pete Ricketts expressed his confidence that Mr. Hoch could be "impartial," others have raised doubts. As reported in the [Omaha World Herald](#), Lincoln businessman Alan Jacobsen compared the appointment to "hiring a fox to watch the chicken coop," while Lakota advocate Frank LaMere asked, "Am I the only one who thinks that this is a conflict of interest and flies in the face of logic?" Project Extra Mile Executive Director Chris Wagner added that "We need public health and safety at the table, not a person who spent their life in the industry."

During the March 4th General Affairs Committee public hearing on the nomination, [Wagner testified](#) that Nebraska's immense burden of alcohol harm - including high rates of binge drinking and self-reported alcohol-impaired driving - pointed to the need for public health expertise on the Commission rather than alcohol business interests.

The General Affairs Committee will vote in the coming days on Mr. Hoch's nomination. Should his nomination advance to the floor for debate by the full legislature, a final vote could take place within weeks.

Time for an Alcohol Tax Increase

Communities have an opportunity to make a big difference for health in NE

Nebraska has an important opportunity to improve public health, reduce health care costs and fund property tax relief across the state.

In previous newsletters, we have outlined the many public health benefits of alcohol tax increases - including reductions in [alcohol-related car crashes](#), [liver disease](#), [some alcohol-related cancers](#), [low birth weight](#), and [child maltreatment](#). We have also noted that these reductions will bring lower health care costs associated with excessive alcohol consumption.

LB 314 and LB 497 include alcohol tax increases as part of a suite of revenue generating policies seeking to reduce the burden placed on property owners in order to fund local schools. [Project Extra Mile testified](#) in support of these measures.

Criticism of increasing alcohol taxes has been based on idea that this tax increase would be very damaging to Nebraska's craft beer industry. An honest examination reveals that those fears aren't based in facts. The state of Maryland passed a tax increase (similar to the one proposed in the Briese amendment) in 2011. While that policy did save lives and health care costs by reducing [alcohol-related traffic crashes](#) and [sexually-transmitted infection rates](#), it did not kill or even slow down Maryland's craft beer business. Instead the craft beer industry in that state has continued to [thrive](#) following the increase (see chart below.) Illinois' craft beer sector also has continued to show [robust growth](#) following its 2009 alcohol excise tax increase.

In fact, some of the other talking points used by alcohol industry have also been inaccurate. The 3% alcohol-specific sales tax in Maryland raised the price of a typical drink by about a nickel, according to an [analysis of that policy](#). If that holds for Nebraska, the cost of an average six-pack of beer would increase by about 30¢ total.

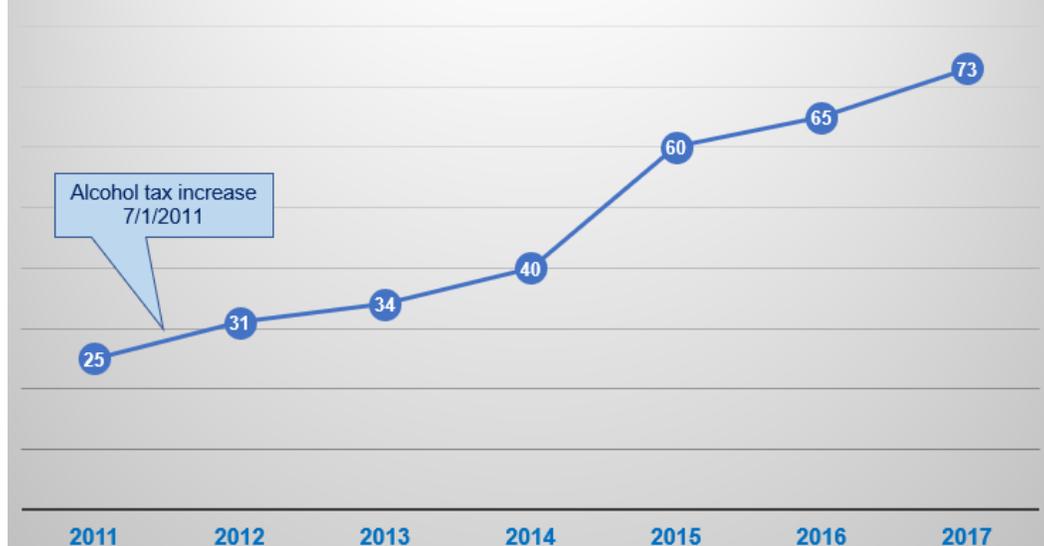
As Project Extra Mile Executive Director Chris Wagner stated in a [recent editorial in the Lincoln Journal Star](#):

Excessive drinking is killing our citizens, contributing to crime, spreading disease and costing us at least \$1 billion each year. Increasing alcohol taxes isn't a silver bullet, but it will go a long way towards addressing these problems.

To find your senator's information in order to contact him/her in support of alcohol taxes, [click here](#). Nebraska needs your support!

State of Maryland Number of Craft Breweries Operating Per Year

Source: Brewers Association



March 13 Coalition Meeting on Alcohol and Cancer

Project Extra Mile to welcome nationally recognized researcher

The research linking alcohol consumption to a number of types of cancer - including those of the head and neck, liver, female breast, stomach, and colorectum - has been steadily growing.

Here are some milestones in the long history of research on the alcohol-cancer connection:

- **1910** - French physician L. Lamy observes that approximately 8 out of 10 patients with either esophageal cancer or cancer of the cardiac region of the stomach consume alcohol excessively.
- **1988** - Alcoholic beverages are declared "[carcinogenic to humans](#)" (Group 1) by the authoritative International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) of the World Health Organization. Subsequent IARC reports in 2007 and 2010 will confirm this finding and identify additional types of cancer caused by alcohol use.
- **2000** - The U.S. Toxicology program (the highest authority on cancer-causing agents in the U.S.) determines that alcoholic beverage consumption is "[known to be a human carcinogen](#)" - its highest category of carcinogenicity.
- **2017** - A [study led by the American Cancer Society](#) finds alcohol consumption to be one of the three leading preventable causes of cancer in the U.S., along with tobacco use and overweight/obesity.
- **2017** - The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) releases the groundbreaking report [Alcohol and Cancer: A Statement of the American Society of Clinical Oncology](#) which presents the strength of evidence on alcohol as cancer risk factor, while also stressing the need for evidence-based alcohol policies to reduce the burden of alcohol-related cancers.
- **2018** - [Diet, Nutrition, Physical Activity and Cancer: A Global Perspective \(the Third Expert Report\)](#) from the World Cancer Research Foundation/American Institute of Cancer Research (WCRF/AICR) confirms that there is no safe threshold of alcohol consumption with regard to risk for breast cancer in women, with risk increasing at just half a drink per day.

We are very pleased that the lead author of the ASCO report - Dr. Noelle LoConte

- will be joining us for our March coalition meeting. Dr. LoConte is the Principal Investigator for the Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Control program and a practicing oncologist specializing in gastrointestinal cancers, as well as cancer of any type in the older adult.

Please join us for this important conversation! Parking information is available [here](#).



**Omaha Metro
Coalition Meeting**

**Wednesday, March 13, 2019
9:00am-10:00am**



**Dr. Noelle LoConte,
University of Wisconsin
Comprehensive Cancer Center,**
will discuss her work as lead author of an
*American Society of Clinical Oncology
statement on alcohol and cancer.*

**Location:
University of Nebraska Medical Center
Harold M & Beverly Maurer Center for Public Health
Room 2001
519 S 40th Plaza Circle
Omaha, NE 68105**

Thank you for your involvement!



Jennifer Pollock, Coalition Chair

**For more information: (402) 963-9047
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NEWS BRIEFS

Law enforcement trainings: Controlled Underage Party Dispersal

Project Extra Mile and the Monument Prevention Coalition coordinated two Law Enforcement Trainings last week (in Omaha and Scottsbluff, respectively) focused on preventing and reducing alcohol-related harms through Controlled Underage Party Dispersal.

Approximately 70 law enforcement officers learned how to utilize best practices

to ensure public safety and officer safety by containing an underage drinking party and dispersing the participants in an organized and efficient manner. Specifically, they learned how to:

1. Analyze the scope and consequences of underage drinking today.
2. Assess the philosophy behind controlled party dispersal.
3. Identify the steps necessary to process offenders at underage drinking parties.
4. Identify tactical approaches to underage drinking parties in different environments.
5. Practice implementing the steps necessary to process offenders at underage drinking parties.

The Scottsbluff training was also [featured in a local news story](#).

For those who were unable to attend these trainings but are interested in receiving information on this topic, please contact PEM Policy & Research Coordinator Liene Topko at **(402) 963-9047** or liene@projectextramile.org.



31 businesses cited for selling alcohol to minors

In an effort to crack down on the availability of alcohol to minors, Omaha metro area law enforcement officers conducted compliance checks on January 4th and March 1-2 resulting in 31 (10%) of the 320 retail outlets checked in Douglas and Sarpy Counties being cited for selling alcohol to a minor. The percentage of businesses cited doubled from 5% in November. A summary sheet of the compliance check results and a full list of businesses checked can be found by clicking [here](#).

"We're very concerned that the percentage of businesses selling to minors in the Omaha area has doubled since November," said Sgt. Jeremy Leifeld with the Ralston Police Department. "Underage drinking has many negative consequences for our communities and retailers can do their part by instructing employees to check ID, verify age and never sell to youth presenting a vertical ID."

14 (45%) of those businesses have been cited for selling alcohol to minors in the past -- nine of those within the last four years, which the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission (LCC) looks at when considering enhanced penalties:

- **A.B.'s 66, 4926 Underwood Ave, Omaha (9/15);**
- **Asian Family Super-Market, 5916 Ames Ave, Omaha (4/17);**

- **Hy-Vee Drugstore, 8404 N 30 Street, Omaha (7/18);**
- **J C Mandarin, 843 N 98 Street, Omaha (7/15);**
- **Kicks 66, 2505 Abbott Dr Plaza, Omaha (4/17);**
- **Landing Zone, 7170 Bennington Rd, Omaha (6/15);**
- **Mega Saver, 7210 Harrison St, Ralston (5/17, 8/14, 5/09);**
- **Speedee Mart 2760, 100 W Centennial Rd, Omaha (1/16);**
- **Super T's Liquor & Mini Mart, 3805 Lake St, Omaha (9/17).**

Also concerning is that nearly half (8 of 18) of the businesses cited for the first time received their liquor licenses within the last two years. If found guilty, these 18 businesses could face a 10- to 20-day suspension that could be paid off as a fine at \$50 per day.

44 officers from the Douglas County Sheriff's Office, La Vista Police Department, Nebraska State Patrol, Omaha Police Department, Ralston Police Department and Sarpy County Sheriff's Office participated in the three-day, enhanced underage drinking enforcement effort.

To assist in reporting 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 and Grants #93.959 and #93.243 under the Substance Abuse Prevention & Treatment Block Grant and Strategic Prevention Framework-Partnership for Success Grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration Center for Substance Abuse Prevention through the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services and Region 6 Behavioral Healthcare. The Nebraska Department of Transportation - Highway Safety Office also funds the tip line. Project Extra Mile helped to coordinate the enforcement efforts.



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