

Enforcement of Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) Final Report For *Rural Initiative Grant* –12/09

In 2004, Lincoln County increased its efforts to address underage drinking. This effort was driven by an awareness of the need to address inconsistency in prevention and enforcement as well as alarming data. Primarily Lincoln County Health and Human Services Prevention Department, Partnership Against Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse, Newport Police Department drove this initiative.

Background:

- For the past ten years LC experienced a higher than State average rate for alcohol use among youth.
- LC had the highest rate in the State for alcohol consumption per capita by adults.
- Alcohol availability was 57% higher than the State average with 308 retail alcohol sales outlets.
- Compliance checks rates showed a 50% non-compliance by retail vendors.
- Vendors were not consistent in checking Identification.
- MIP enforcement was not routine throughout the county. Some Law enforcement Officers were reluctant to cite MIP's. Rates were declining.
- Officers expressed frustration that they did not know what the outcomes and consequences were to the minors that were cited. In fact, the consequences themselves were not consistent and it was identified that on several occasions minors received little to no punishment
- The Sheriff's Office was seeing the majority of large parties located in the rural areas (forests, campgrounds, ect.) They received little support to enforce.
- There was no consistency in consequences of MIP's at School District.
- When discussion increased around MIP party dispersal activity the District Attorney perceived that the officers wanted to kick down doors to obtain access to underage parties. Officers were frustrated by not knowing what the District Attorney's policies were.

EUDL Strategies Identified:

Improve the Effectiveness of Law Enforcement

- Strengthen existing policy and procedures
- Standardize MIP procedures throughout Lincoln County
- Ensure greater levels of accountability

- Strengthen essential partnerships

Reduce the Availability of Alcohol

- Increase the number of compliance check operations
- Increase the number of minor decoy operations
- Increase Responsible Vender training
- Educate about furnishing laws such as Social Hosting.

The EUDL Rural initiative was also designed to organize the local communities focus on the issues that negatively created a climate of acceptance of alcohol use among youth. This included the need to create change in community norms that accepted underage use as a rite of passage. It was clear that there was a need to create a public information campaign that not only educated the community about underage drinking laws and liabilities but also begin this shift in norms.

The Shift began:

Community prevention partners and law enforcement began this initiative in December 2004 after attending a training provided by PIRE. Lincoln County Health and Human Services Prevention program in partnership with Newport Police Department, received the Rural Communities Initiative funding in January 2005. This provided the needed resources to move these efforts forward in a supported strategic manner.

First steps:

Relationship building- Lincoln County is known as a collaborative community so partnerships were in place; they just needed to be strengthened. Consistent communication was among identified as one of the primary missing links.

Partners:

- Newport Police Department
- Lincoln County Health & Human Services
- Lincoln City and Toledo Police Departments
- Lincoln County Sheriff's Office
- Oregon State Police
- Lincoln County Board of County Commissioners
- Lincoln County Commission on Children and Families
- Lincoln County School District
- Oregon State Parks
- US Forest Service/Bureau of Land management
- Lincoln County District Attorney

- Lincoln County Juvenile Department/Teen Court
- Judicial System- Judges, Juvenile Probation officers
- Samaritan Pacific Communities Hospital
- Partnership Against Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse (PAADA)
- Oregon Liquor Control Commission
- Oregon State University
- Property management companies
- US Coast Guard
- Parents
- Youth

Accomplishments:

- Consistency in the enforcement of zero tolerance countywide.
- Improved collaboration around enforcement of underage drinking laws among individual County and State law enforcement agencies.
- Countywide interagency support of the enforcement of underage drinking
- EUDL Enforcer, a newsletter created to improve communication among partners created, published and distributed at regular intervals.
- Countywide law enforcement and other partner training on enforcement of underage drinking laws and controlled party dispersal.
- Attitude Change in Law Enforcement and Community regarding underage drinking
- Recruitment and training of volunteers for controlled party dispersal. Use of trained volunteers has increased processing efficiency and enabled officers to return to an "in-service, available for call" status within a shorter timeframe. Duties performed:
 - Assist officers with processing paperwork.
 - Photograph the party scene.
 - Arrange for safe rides home.
 - Sit with youth until parent(s) can be contacted.
 - Insure safety of underage youth.
 - Talk to the minors about consequences.
 - Record license plate numbers of vehicles in the immediate vicinity
 - Assist officers with the identification of partygoers
 - Assist in perimeter security
 - Notify an officer of any possible vandalism attempts or individuals attempting to leave or return to the party scene.
 - Call Parents using Parental Notification Script

- Advise officers if there are any complications
- Initial Barriers to success of volunteer program, which included hesitation by law enforcement, and lack of alternative activities for volunteers were overcome.
- Volunteer program, *Yellow Jackets*, evolved. Volume of MIP parties was not enough to sustain interest so volunteers became involved in other activities. Volunteers increased their visibility in the community. They assisted with high school games, prom and other school related dances, community events (Wine and Seafood Festival, Parades, County Fair) and Community presentations (Chamber City Counsel, Rotary, grad night parent meetings, Radio talk shows).
- The message: *Underage use is illegal, unsafe and unacceptable*, became consistent among law enforcement and volunteers.
- District Attorney's perspective on enforcement was clearly defined.
- District Attorney instituted the filing of contempt's for minors who do not present themselves to court after citation of MIP.
- The Newport Controlled Party Dispersal Policy and Procedures Manual, which details the policies and procedures for the use of volunteers in law enforcement was completed. The manual can be found at www.lincolncountyccf.com.
- Presentations on the "*Use of volunteer's in Controlled Party Dispersal*" have been offered at both Orlando's and Nashville's National Conference for the Enforcement of Underage Drinking.
- Newport's Project Director, Community volunteer, Newport Police Chief and Lieutenant have presented two National Webinars on the subject of Controlled Party Dispersal. The most recent, held on July 23, 2009 addressed on the "Use and Sustainability of Volunteers in Controlled Party Dispersal".
- An important aspect of the initiative included media outreach programs which provided clear and precise messages about the dangers of binge drinking, drinking and driving, and zero tolerance policies, including underage drinking party enforcement. The *None b4 21* campaign was launched.
- Policy established for all law enforcement agencies to provide press releases to media (we have newspapers 2x week) of underage drinking enforcement activities. Names are provided if youth are 18 or over.
- Minors understand that there is an increase in enforcement and consistency in consequences. MIP citations significantly increased when initiative began, but recently there has been a decrease in both the number of MIP citations and in particular the number of large rural parties.

- In 2004 there was a sharp rise in Minor in Possession of Alcohol offenses to 172. This number has dropped to 93 in 2008. Law enforcement continues to see fewer large minor parties.
- There has been a self-reported reduction in the number of youth that consume alcohol. The Countywide 2007-08 Oregon Healthy teen survey showed a self reported decrease in 8th grade 30-day use grade from 36% to 24.6%. and 11th grade self reported use from 51.3% to 45.7%. This number for 11th grade decreased to 38.3% in Newport where there was a focus of prevention and enforcement activities

Other successes:

- Law Enforcement Officers feel supported by community and became more willing to “dig” up a minor party.
- Youth are seeing the community’s support of law enforcement.
- An increased number of youth are making the decision not to participate in parties.
- A shift in community norms is beginning.
- Partnership with school district improved. School Board continues to look at stronger policies:
 - Graduation Policy- Adopted Feb 08- Participation in the graduation ceremony is considered a privilege. The student must meet any diploma or certificate of attendance requirements in order to participate in the ceremony. The building principal may deny student participation in the ceremony for any inappropriate student behavior or disciplinary reason as defined in the student handbook
 - Increased Consequences for Chemical Health Violations- for any violation at or away from school, including the off-season and all vacations. Policy addressed Student Athletes/Student Council/ASB/Elected Officers/Elected and Selected Position: Adopted August 09-
 - First Offense
 - Suspension from participation in the next competition for which they would have been eligible for thirty three and one third percent of the number of the scheduled regular season contests and/or 21 calendar day suspension form office;
 - Completion of a Drug and Alcohol Assessment at their own expense, from a district-approved provider.
 - Meet with law enforcement.

- Reconcile with peers as determined collaboration with coach/advisor

Second Offense

- Athletes: Suspension from participation in the next competition for which they would have been eligible for fifty percent of the number of the scheduled regular season contests.
- ASB members: Loss of ASB title
- Completion of Drug and Alcohol assessment at own expense
- Meet with law enforcement
- Reconcile with peers as determined collaboration with coach/advisor

Third Offense-Athletes

- Suspension from all sports and activities for one calendar year
- Completion of a Drug and Alcohol assessment at own expense
- Meet with law enforcement
- Approval by school administrator

Third Offense-ASB Members

- No longer eligible for elected positions
- A system was set up so the School District would be notified immediately of MIP's.

Sustainability efforts:

Before the completion of the grant, a sustainability plan had not been developed to maintain the EUDL efforts. Without a part time coordinator, momentum was lost and volunteers began to drop out of the program. Law enforcement assumed the volunteer program has disbanded. Without regularly scheduled meetings, and the discontinuation of the EUDL Enforcer, communication among partners decreased. To add to the disconnect beginning to occur, new law enforcement officers were not aware of the EUDL initiative and they had been no new trainings scheduled.

The receipt of the Drug Free Communities Grant has helped Newport continue to move forward in their EUDL work and refocus on sustainability. A EUDL subcommittee has been established and they currently report to the DFC coalition monthly. Work has continued to solidify the Volunteer program within the Newport Police Department. The Chief of police sees this as a priority and has assigned a Lieutenant to the subcommittee. The coalition understands that multiple environmental strategies has had an effect on the community and will continue to utilize a variety of strategies.

The Controlled Party Dispersal Volunteer program is being integrated into the Newport Police Department's VIP (volunteer in policing) program. Volunteers are being contacted to complete the VIP application and screening process. The Policy and Procedure manual is currently under revision, with a revised copy to be completed and replace the online version by December 31, 2009.

During the three years of the EUDL Initiative, responsible vendor trainings, compliance checks and minor decoy operations were never institutionalized. The relationship with OLCC remained unstable throughout the grant period. New partnerships are currently being developed with OLCC, Newport Police Department and Sheriffs Office to build an annual calendar of trainings so these successful programs at reducing availability can be carried out at regular intervals.

During this period of time, one of the most exciting policy changes has been the work that was undertaken with John Underwood's, "Life of an Athlete " program. With financial assistance from the Drug Free Communities grant, a team was sent to training in Lake Placid, New York. Lincoln County school district sent four school athletic administrators, along with the DFC project coordinator and a newly assigned Life of an Athlete school coordinator. The School Board passed the improved policy and mandatory school meetings have been held for parents and students participating not only in athletes, but any extracurricular or co curricular activities for both fall and winter. As school has progressed, peer leaders have been identified to work with this program. Due to the relationship developed during the past four years with the school district around enforcement of underage drinking the school board and administration worked with EUDL subcommittee seamlessly in the implementation of this new program.

One of the biggest difficulties has been the struggle to create uniform MIP policies for both under 18 and 18-20 year olds between what is occurring in the State juvenile court and municipal courts. Several meetings have been held to create uniform policies, as well as identify resources available to deliver diversion/education programs. Due to budgetary reductions, we have lost our teen court program. A task force has been mobilized to look into alternative funding. A meeting is to scheduled to bring all the judges together to review protocols and come to an agreement. The juvenile department and courts are in support of this meeting.