43 percent of Central Oregon stores sell liquor to minors in OLCC test

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Three of Seven Business Fail OLCC Compliance Check on February 14BEND, Oregon â€“ A compliance check of Central Oregon businesses by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission conducted February 14 turned up dismal results â€“ 43 percent of those checked sold alcohol to minors. The 57 percent passing rate is well below last yearâ€™s statewide average of 78 percent.

The three businesses that failed the check by selling booze to underage buyers -â€“ Westside Texaco Food Mart in Bend, Juniper Golf Club in Redmond, and Sisters Mainline Station in Sisters â€“ are subject to OLCC sanctions including fines or license suspensions. The store clerks who sold to the minor are subject to criminal charges and a minimum $350 fine.

The minor sales compliance checks are statutorily required and are performed statewide as part of the agency's effort to curtail drinking by minors, which is a serious problem throughout the state. The 57 percent passing rate is below the 2007 statewide average of 78 percent. The OLCC tests about 1,300 licensed liquor businesses annually, in conjunction with a number of police agencies. The following licensees passed the check by refusing to sell alcoholic beverages to the minor volunteer: Space Age Station in Sisters, The Gallimaufry in Sisters, 7-Eleven Store #2353-20375B in Bend and Quick Way Market in Bend.During the compliance check, the minor volunteer attempts to purchase alcohol from licensees or their employees to determine if they are properly checking identification and obeying state law prohibiting alcohol sales to anyone under 21 years old. The minors are supervised byOLCC inspectors or other law officers, carry their own legal ID and are advised not to disguise their age or encourage the sale of alcohol. The businesses involved in the checks are selected at random through a scientific computer program or have been targeted due to prior alcoholsales to minors."Many times it is human error that is to blame," said Jeff Jett, Regional Enforcement Manager for OLCC. "We ask all businesses to please take the time to check ID properly to protect themselves and the public." The OLCC provides a free training course once a month on how to check ID's, identify false identification and the laws regarding minors and alcohol. Additional training opportunities include training for store clerks and service permit holders.