

# ABCConnections

an e-newsletter for ABC Boards in NC

## ABC COMMISSION SUPPORTS FUNDING FOR ALCOHOL LAW ENFORCEMENT

On November 14 ABC Commission Chairman Jim Gardner appeared before the General Assembly's Joint Legislative Oversight Committee on Justice and Public Safety to address funding for the state's Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE). Chairman Gardner told the Committee that if the state hopes to make a dent in problems such as underage drinking and violence at private night clubs, lawmakers must dedicate more money to ALE.

(For the current budget year, legislators cut the agency's budget by \$1.75 million. The ABC Commission gave ALE \$500,000 to help make up for that shortfall, with another \$200,000 coming from the lottery commission. Combined, that \$700,000 allowed ALE to retain a dozen staff members, nine of them sworn officers.) Chairman Gardner noted that law enforcement will play a key role in reducing the supply of alcohol to underage consumers in this state.



Chairman Jim Gardner

## PRIVATE CLUB ENFORCEMENT

In September the ABC Commission sent a letter to more than 1,000 private clubs warning that future incidents of violence would result in substantial fines and penalties for permit holders.

"The ABC Commission has always used its regulatory authority to curb dangerous behavior at outlets that sell alcohol. What we are doing now is taking very visible steps to warn club owners that violence as a business practice simply will not be tolerated. If they allow life-threatening violence on their property, they will incur the full penalties available to the Commission," said ABC Commission Chairman Jim Gardner.

The letter also included a reminder about the requirements to comply with all of the rules related to holding a private club permit, such as membership requirements. Subsequent enforcement actions by ALE at private clubs have generated news stories in some cities and continued to raise awareness about the issues related to violence at the clubs.





## UNDERAGE INITIATIVE ACTIVITIES

Throughout the month of December ABC Commission Chairman Jim Gardner is scheduling meetings with leaders across the state to present a preview of the North Carolina Initiative to Reduce Underage Drinking.

In Pinehurst, December 4, he spoke with more than 70 representatives of the alcohol industry at the annual meeting of the North Carolina Beer and Wine Wholesalers Association.

“The problem is very serious -- literally life and death -- and the solution cannot be a quick-fix,” Gardner said. “I have been very pleased with the support that we already have received from industry, public health advocacy groups and from other governmental leaders. This must be a joint effort and a long-term one to make the difference that we want to make.”

## NC ABC COMMISSION ALIGNS WITH STATEWIDE NORTH CAROLINA ANNUAL SADD (STUDENTS AGAINST DESTRUCTIVE DECISIONS) CONFERENCE

The ABC Commission assisted approximately 250 North Carolina youth to participate in the 31st Annual NC SADD Leadership Conference at the Double Tree Brownstone Hotel in Raleigh November 15-17.

Sponsored by the Youth Advocacy council of the NC Department of Administration, the conference featured a variety of student and advisor workshops and group activities related to SADD’s mission assisting young people in their schools and communities to promote highway safety and reduce teen involvement with alcohol, drugs, violence, teen pregnancy and other challenges they may face. Speakers who were disabled in traffic crashes or responsible for the vehicle deaths of others gave first-person accounts of how seemingly insignificant decisions can lead to tragic consequences. The students also held a candlelight memorial for their peers who lost their lives because of their own or others’ destructive decisions.

The ABC Commission helped the conference by contributing \$3,000 toward scholarships for students to attend the conference. Along with contributions from the alcohol industry, a total of \$10,588 in funding provided almost 85 scholarships. This meant instead of having to pay \$190 for the three-day conference, the students only had to pay \$65. This lower cost of the conference enabled more students to attend.

On opening night, singer Scotty McCreery, who was on tour, sent a video expressing his support for the conference and the SADD program and congratulating the students on their work in trying to guide their peers in positive directions.

For additional information about [NC SADD](http://www.ncyao.com) or the conference, please visit the Youth Advocacy and Involvement Office online ([www.ncyao.com](http://www.ncyao.com)) or contact NC SADD State Coordinator Harriett Southerland at 919-807-4400.

Highlights of the initiative being spearheaded by the Commission include:

- A review of current and future legislation related to underage drinking
- Tightening enforcement of existing laws for businesses that sell to underage persons
- A sustained awareness campaign to change the culture

Underage drinking costs North Carolina more than \$1 billion annually, according to research compiled by the NC Department of Health and Human Services. Industry data indicates that an average of one person under 21 a week is killed in a North Carolina alcohol related incident.

“The costs of underage drinking are too great to ignore,” Gardner said. “The time to work together for a meaningful change is now.”

## PITT COUNTY ABC OPENS NEW STORE

The Pitt County Alcoholic Beverage Control Board celebrated the grand opening of a new ABC store November 20 at 2000 East Arlington Blvd., Greenville, bringing to nine the total number of stores operated by the Pitt County ABC Board.

The new store is a 5,000 square-foot-space with more than 1,600 products featured. It replaces two older stores that were closed prior to the new store's opening. During the last fiscal year Pitt County ABC generated nearly \$16 million in gross sales revenue.



*ABC Commission and local boards across North Carolina are focusing on underage drinking reduction in their communities. Please send examples that relate to underage drinking to Luther Snyder at [Luther.Snyder@abc.nc.gov](mailto:Luther.Snyder@abc.nc.gov). If you have retirement announcements, newsletter article suggestions or other questions, contact Agnes Stevens at [agnes.stevens@abc.nc.gov](mailto:agnes.stevens@abc.nc.gov) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month.*