MCSAC

MCSAC connects non-profit, governmental and community-based organizations along with local businesses to promote system and community improvements for the benefit of children and families in our area. Manatee County Substance Abuse Coalition (MCSAC), founded in 2001, is the largest and most successful prevention coalition in Manatee County, FL. MCSAC is the County’s coordinating body for prevention, with a reputation for developing successful community partnerships and policy initiatives, providing youth and adult prevention education and engaging in comprehensive strategies to positively impact the health of our community. Our mission is to develop strategic community partnerships that implement comprehensive campaigns and strategies to reduce substance abuse throughout Manatee County, especially among youth. Through research, consensus building and coordination of resources, MCSAC takes a leadership role in:

- Convening for the purpose of educating and providing networking opportunities among prevention, law enforcement, school, health and human services
- Facilitating impartial, progressive methodologies to positively affect systemic change
- Monitoring community trends affecting quality of life issues around substance abuse
- Advocating for the efficient and effective use of community resources
- Fostering diverse partnerships among all sectors of the community
- Mobilizing the community to support measurable prevention outcomes and effectively evaluating prevention programming
- Collecting, analysing, interpreting, and sharing indicator data with the community
- Supporting other coalitions regionally and throughout the state to further the field of work
- Policy change

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Identifying a lack of Coalition involvement by a key community sector – young people – the Manatee County Substance Abuse Coalition (MCSAC) determined to initiate a youth component in July, 2010. The coalition recruited, screened and identified a group of teens and adult mentors who received training at the national Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America (CADCA) convention in July 2010. In late August 2010, with funding from the Office of Juvenile Justice’s Enforcing Underage Drinking Laws (EUDL) program, MCSAC designed and launched the Florida Engaging Youth Initiative/Youth Leadership Academy (EYI/YLA) and hired a Coordinator for the program.

Strategic recruitment supported by school administrators added a diverse group of additional teens representing 4 different high schools to the original group. Beginning in October 2010, with resources provided by the Manatee County Sheriff’s Office (MCSO), YLA received ongoing leadership training, best practice information on underage drinking prevention, research and data assessment skill building, and formal training to perform alcohol environmental scans at local festivals. MCSO deputies participated in initial trainings, underscoring the importance of the ongoing working relationship between law enforcement and YLA. As its primary focus, MCSAC’s Youth Leadership Academy, partnering with law enforcement, the Manatee School District, and the community, and supported by MCSAC resources, designed a multi-layered media and outreach campaign to address the issue of underage drinking. This booklet is one component of that effort.

The Youth Leadership Academy researched, identified and observed five festivals in Manatee County, Florida (four are reported here). The Academy students spent four to seven hours at each festival. Criteria from the Special Events Assessment Form (developed from Nassau County’s excellent Project SAFER) were used as a “checklist” for observations that were subsequently documented through written reports and photos. The Academy members discussed all aspects of their observations with the YLA Coordinator and then compiled a comprehensive list of findings from the individual reports. YLA subsequently formulated a list of recommendations for each festival/event to address safety issues observed and incorporated these into formal reports about each festival. Meetings were scheduled with festival promoters to discuss the reports with options for their consideration that incorporated best practice for festival and public event safety. Festival organizers were given a copy of MCSAC Safe Festivals: A Community Guide to Best Practices for Festivals and Public Events as a planning tool.

YLA Community Festival Report presentations and a synthesized list of options for consideration are scheduled for review by County Commissioners and the Bradenton City Council. YLA and MCSAC intend to advocate for policy change to incorporate festival safety best practices within the design and permitting of community festivals. Note: In 2011-2012, environmental scans are planned for all previously scanned festivals: comparative reports are scheduled to provide to festival organizers and policy makers as a means to track positive outcomes in improved community health and safety.

Public festivals are an important part of community life and culture. At their best, they can be a place for kids to play and family and friends to gather. However, when alcohol is a major part of the celebration, community events are often marred by alcohol-related violence, vandalism, traffic fatalities, injuries and problems associated with underage drinking.

Festivals and other public events can play a dual role in community norms by both setting and reflecting them. As alcohol takes on a larger role at public events, the norms of that event itself shift and the use of alcohol is more and more reinforced at that event. Since a community’s public events are often opportunities to celebrate the community and its identity, then as alcohol becomes a larger part of these events, the community becomes more identified with alcohol.

So the first question to be answered is: What is the public event you’re referring to? Is it a neighborhood party whose intent is to celebrate a community or a culture or as family entertainment? Is it a holiday celebration that builds awareness of cultural heritage? Is it a sporting event that highlights physical achievements and teamwork? Public events often unintentionally support and encourage heavy use of alcohol. With beer tents, signage and sponsorships, alcohol can easily overshadow the purpose of these events and become the main attraction.

Public events often unintentionally support and encourage heavy use of alcohol. With beer tents, signage and sponsorships, alcohol can easily overshadow the purpose of these events and become the main attraction. Youth are particularly at risk for involvement in alcohol-related problems at public events. Factors that increase the access and availability of alcohol to underage youth at such events include:

• Large number of youth who are unmonitored by adults
• Difficulty managing large groups
• High volume of customers – low volume of servers
• Inexperienced vendors or servers (volunteers or working from temporary alcohol permits)
• Inconsistent (sometimes nonexistent) ID checking
• No designated areas for sales/consumption, with barriers to support underage enforcement

While most of our festivals are designed as celebrations, there are serious issues underlying the production of festivals and events such as risk management, key aspects of insurance, health, safety and licensing requirements. Through surveys, focus groups and one-on-one interviews, MCSAC sought out community members in order to learn their thoughts about alcohol issues in general and found serious concerns around festivals in particular and the risks they pose, especially for underage access to alcohol.

Although organizers may worry that placing any limits on alcohol will result in smaller crowds, a national survey of adults showed that over 80 percent of respondents were in favor of alcohol restrictions at events. The intent of this publication is to help organizers reclaim those special events that may have lost their original focus by instituting small policy changes and integrating some simple environmental strategies, helping to make “community” the main attraction for festivals and events again.
Recognizing the risks associated with community festivals and events, MCSAC’s Youth Leadership Academy requested and received State of Florida-designed training on Safe Community Festivals and Fairs, conducted 4 community festival monitoring assessments, and then designed this booklet to help community festival organizers keep festivals “family-friendly” and to prevent underage drinking. MCSAC wants to make clear that the Youth Leadership Academy is acting on this issue in order to prevent future problems and not in response to any specific community tragedy or serious alcohol-related problems at any specific festival.

**Methodology**

**Training**
- List of festivals developed— organizers, history/growth, intended purpose of event
- Festival Screening Tool (example in Resources)
  - Advertising and Publicity – off site
  - Parking Area/Access to Venue
  - Advertising and Promotions – on site
  - Event sponsorship
  - Health and Safety Risks
  - Availability of Non-alcoholic Beverages
  - Sales of Alcohol
  - Beverages Available at Alcohol Sales Locations
  - Youth-Targeted Activities
  - Attendance Demographics
  - Other Significant Observations
- Festivals chosen for scans/criteria
- Report compilation
- Discussion and recommendations for Options for Considerations for individual festival organizers
- Comprehensive policy recommendations

**Festival Scan Process:** MCSAC’s trained Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) members, working in teams, conducted Safe Festival Environmental Scans of 4 events, observing vendor and attendee behavior, presence/absence of alcohol related signage, presence of law enforcement, etc., using a comprehensive checklist of festival elements as a guide (see Resources). Individual team reports were compiled and reviewed by the YLA group as a whole along with the YLA Coordinator. YLA members were assigned to capture consensus and develop a draft report that included photo-journaling their observations, with a final report-out to the group for approval. YLA representatives then delivered their written report, presentation and recommendations to the Coalition Board and Members, requesting Coalition advocacy on general and event-specific policy options for consideration to festival organizers. YLA members are presenting their observations and recommendations to policymakers as part of their advocacy for a safe and healthy Manatee County.

**Anna Maria Island Bayfest**

**Saturday, October 16, 2010**

**10AM to 10PM**

**Event:** The annual Anna Maria Island Bayfest, sponsored by the Anna Maria Island Chamber of Commerce, celebrated its tenth anniversary in October 2010. The one day festival, located exclusively on the four-block length of Pine Avenue, ran for twelve hours. The festival benefits nonprofit agencies, local businesses and residents of the community. The money raised at Bayfest (and the Friday Fest kickoff) typically goes into scholarship funds to assist high school seniors should they pursue a Business Degree. This year the event was assessed by MCSAC’s trained Youth Leadership Academy (YLA) members, YLA Director Barbara Gentry, MCSAC Coordinator Rita Chamberlain, and MCSAC members. 11 assessors arrived at approximately 10AM, entering the Festival from various locations. Some entered from side streets such as Tarpon and Crescent Circle, having parked on festival-parallel streets Spring and Magnolia. Some entered from Bay Blvd, utilizing public parking on either side of the City Pier. Parking was found along all side streets close to the Bayfest: there was no specific direction on where to park in neighborhoods. Assessors toured the entire festival area multiple times, varying sides of the street and times of observation.

**Observations**

**Advertising:** Advertising for the Anna Maria Island Bayfest was found in newspapers, on the Internet and on posters and handouts at multiple and various venues in Manatee County.

**Parking:** Festival parking was advertised as available in remote areas with bus service to the festival. No entrance fee was charged as entry was possible from multiple locations. Parking was also available along all side streets close to the festival, but there were no specific parking directions.

**Venue:** Arts, crafts, jewelry, and local business vendors were represented as well as a featured classic car show with over 100 automobiles. Musical entertainment was available on a stage (in the food area) periodically throughout the event. A children’s play area with large scale elements (bounce house) was provided. A central food and beverage area was casually designated, but food and beverages were also available along the entire length of Pine Avenue.

**Health and Safety:** Police presence was observed and, while not overwhelming, seemed adequate for this festival. Comfort stations were available and visible. Trash receptacles were adequate and mostly used,
but recycling was not used. Coolers and alcoholic beverages were observed at parked cars, along houses on the adjacent streets, and in the car show area. Bags and coolers were not checked at any entrance venue and there were no signs about rules re: age for alcohol purchase. One small toddler-level sign in the food court area stated “No Coolers” but was obscured over the course of the day by several other posted signs. Many festival participants were observed carrying canned and bottled alcohol drinks obviously purchased elsewhere.

Alcohol Advertising and Promotion: Several organization sponsorship banners carried alcohol logos. Nearby restaurants featured lower-than-usual prices or alcoholic drinks for the festival. There were no beer gardens. A raffle that had a prize of “A Wheelbarrow Full of Booze” was offered as a fund raiser affiliated with a local nonprofit: no age limit for purchase of raffle tickets was observed. The food service area was immersed in alcohol advertising. Condiments were containers with alcohol images and logos. Flag streamers with alcohol images and logos were observed surrounding the eating area in the food court.

Sale of Alcohol: Festival sales of alcohol were in the food service area and one other service area. There were no “We I.D.” signs posted. No special designated markings such as wristbands were utilized to identify that a patron was of legal drinking age. No cut off time for alcohol service was posted and service continued until the end of the festival, with many individuals observed leaving (and possibly driving) intoxicated. Alcohol vendors sold drinks in 16oz plastic cups, festival priced at $3, with hard liquor drinks priced $4 for a single and $7 for a double (size not indicated). Food and beverage staff were observed drinking alcohol behind the serving areas. Throughout a six hour scanning period, no one was observed being asked to show I.D. in order to be served. Patrons were allowed to purchase multiple drinks during a single purchase. Patrons were observed walking throughout the entire event, including the children’s play area, the pier and the car show, carrying alcoholic beverages in clear plastic cups. Over-served patrons were observed throughout the event. Alcoholic beverages were observed being sold by a food vendor that did not have a beverage permit.

Youth Targeted Activities: The children’s play area was casually defined and not closely monitored. Very few volunteers observed in this area: mostly parental supervision. Parents /patron were frequently observed with alcoholic beverages in the children’s area.

Options for Consideration for the Anna Maria Island BayFest

1. Volunteer servers of alcoholic beverages offered/ attend a free training by MCSAC trainers. MCSAC has ID scanning equipment that can be used by festival servers at no cost
2. Consider increasing the price of alcohol to reduce amount consumed and the elimination of double shot drinks
3. Post “No Cooler” rules at all access points then monitor use of coolers at the event
4. Monitor food vendors to ensure no alcohol is served without proper permits. Cite violators
5. Post “We ID under 40” signs at entrances, alcohol service station, and actively and consistently ID patrons
6. Post alcohol serving times and cut off alcohol service at least one hour prior to event end
7. Provide a Beer Garden where drinking is contained and alcohol purchases can be monitored
8. Lessen the advertising of alcoholic beverages in the dining area to 50% or less
9. Post and enforce “NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED IN THE CHILDREN’S PLAY AREA”
10. Parking around the festival could be assessed for a more controlled method of entry and exit

Rubonia Mardi Gras Festival
Sunday, February 27, 2011
9AM to 9PM
Bayshore Road, Rubonia

Event: Originally organized as a birthday/ street party in 1978, the event has rolled on as a community event for more than 30 years. As the original date coincided with the traditional pre-Lenten Mardi Gras celebration, the party took on that theme. Through the years it has grown to a giant street fair and parade with locally-made floats complete with bead-throwing. In 1998 the Rubonia Community Center (RCC) took over as host of the event. In 2010 lack of funding almost cancelled the event. A group of citizens/neighbors formed a nonprofit organization, the Rubonia Mardi Gras Trust, to revive and sustain the celebration. The group accepts tax-deductible donations to Rubonia Mardi Gras, Inc., with proceeds from the Mardi Gras parade and festival benefiting programs at the RCC. No amount has been indicated, to date, of amount of net proceeds donated to the RCC.

Observations

Advertising: Advertising for the Rubonia Mardi Gras was found in newspapers, on the internet and on posters and handouts at multiple and various venues in Manatee County. Internet advertising included a segment encouraging female patrons to perform lewd acts.

Parking: Parking was available along the streets surrounding the festival area. Residents charged fees to park on their property.

Venue: No entrance fee was charged as there was no main entrance. The festival was well attended and very crowded at times. Festival food and souvenir vendor agreements indicated proceeds were for “educational and recreational programs for economically disadvantaged children of the area”. A parade of primarily home-made and eccentric floats was featured at the beginning of the festival. Some parade participants had open alcohol containers on floats and in their vehicles as they drove in the parade. Manatee County Sheriff’s Deputies took open containers away from people in vehicles. Most parade participants asked were not aware that open container statutes apply during a parade. Teen music/rap entertainment was provided. A variety of craft and other vendors were sprinkled around the venue. One vendor was observed selling toy guns at this event.

Health and Safety: A very large contingent of Manatee County Sheriff’s Deputies and the multi-jurisdictional Gang Task Force were present for the Mardi Gras. At least six gangs were identified in attendance. Comfort stations were available but limited. Trash receptacles were inadequate and not always used: trash produced by event patrons spilled over from receptacles and onto the ground throughout the event. Many patrons were
observed with their own coolers from which they took beer and other beverages. Other patrons were observed openly carrying cases of beer throughout the festival. Some patrons were observed vomiting. Others were observed falling to the ground or having difficulty walking. Patrons were observed walking throughout the entire event carrying alcoholic beverages. Patrons were observed exiting the festival to go to their vehicles carrying glasses of alcohol and with open containers of alcohol.

Alcohol Advertising and Promotion: Only alcohol sponsorship logos were observed throughout the festival.

Sale of Alcohol: Beer cost $2 for a 16 oz draft. Throughout the environmental scan, no one was observed being asked to show their I.D. in order to be served. The response was that it was up to the promoter of the festival to supervise and direct alcohol service, not the distributor. Patrons were observed purchasing multiple drinks during a single transaction. Festival alcohol vendors sold drinks in non-opaque plastic cups. Residents were observed setting up tents on private property to sell hard liquor drinks. There were no beer gardens. There was one “We I.D.” sign posted – and largely ignored. No special designated markings were utilized to identify patrons of legal drinking age. No cut off time for alcohol service was posted and service was observed to continue until the end of the festival.

Youth Targeted Activities: The children’s play area was casually defined and not closely monitored. Patrons were observed walking through the children’s play area carrying alcoholic beverages.

The presence of alcohol and rival gang members, as well as limited vendor compliance while serving alcohol, makes this a potentially risky event. MCSAC also has ID scanning equipment that can be used by festival servers at no cost.

Options for Consideration for the Rubonia Mardi Gras Festival

1. Request that volunteer servers of alcoholic beverages attend a free training by MCSAC trainers. MCSAC also has ID scanning equipment that can be used by festival servers at no cost.
2. Assure all vendors have proper permits for service by developing consistent application policies.
3. Adopt a No Staff Alcohol Consumption policy to maintain the integrity of their decision making and limit the risk of serving alcohol to a minor or already intoxicated individual (which equates to illegal alcohol sales and increased event liability).
4. Limit sales of alcoholic beverages per transaction to two. Servers of alcoholic beverages should refrain from selling drinks to patrons already carrying alcoholic beverages into the service area.
5. Develop clear and consistent standards for merchandise to be sold at the festival and request vendor compliance e.g. no toy guns.
6. Post “We I.D.” signs at every alcohol beverage station and ID all patrons under 40 years of age; issue identifiers such as wristbands and monitor that they are properly used.
7. Post alcohol serving times and cut off alcohol service at least one hour prior to event end.
8. Provide a Beer Garden/designated drinking areas, minimizing access to alcohol by minors and limiting exposure to other event attendees from negative alcohol influenced behaviors.
9. Post and enforce “NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED IN THE CHILDREN’S PLAY AREA”.
10. Drinking on floats and in cars in the parade should be banned.
11. Develop a process and monitor for over-served patrons.
12. Develop a process and monitor for handing off alcoholic beverages to minors.

Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival
Saturday and Sunday, February 19 & 20, 2011
10AM to 6PM daily

Event: The Annual Cortez Fishing Festival, Bradenton, benefits the Florida Institute for Seawater Heritage preserve. The preserve is almost 100 acres of sensitive fish habitat east of the 110-year old Cortez fishing village. This 29th annual Festival was reported to attract more than 20,000 people, offering a little bit of everything that people associate with old Florida. Vendors offered a host of seafood and other edibles. There were arts and crafts booths and live music entertainment. The event involved the entire 10-block area of Cortez Village in western Manatee County. The Festival is organized entirely by a volunteer committee of the nonprofit Florida Institute for Saltwater Heritage (F.I.S.H.). Five MCSAC assessors arrived around noon on Saturday, entering the Festival from the main entrance. Assessors toured the entire festival area multiple times, varying times of observation.

Observations

Advertising: Advertising for the Cortez Seafood Festival was found in newspapers, on TV, on the Internet and on posters and handouts at multiple and various venues in Manatee County.

Parking: Parking was available along the Village streets surrounding the festival area. Attendees were encouraged to make use of all-day shuttle bus service stationed at Cortez Commons at 59th Street West and Cortez Road for a $2/person fee.

Venue: Entrance was managed and controlled with an entrance fee of $3/person sold at clearly identified booths. Tickets were also sold ($1/ticket) at these central booths that could be exchanged for food and beverages provided by the sponsoring event organizers at various kiosks/booths. Local restaurants located within the festival venue (village restaurants) set their own values and charged cash for drinks and food. The festival was well attended and very crowded at times. Music entertainment was provided at designated stage areas.

There was an excellent selection of seafood and deserts throughout the festival. This festival had an excellent selection of vendors selling goods.

Health and Safety: Police, fire department and EMT personnel were observed throughout the event. Patrons were observed walking throughout the entire event, including the children’s play area, carrying alcoholic beverages. Over-served patrons were observed during the event. Patrons were observed exiting the festival to go to their vehicles carrying open containers of alcohol. Even though the event produced large amounts of waste, the disposal was the most efficient of any festival scanned by the YLA. Large boxes painted by local residents were observed.

Scheduling:
Saturday 10AM to 6PM
Sunday 10AM to 6PM

Parking:
Ample parking is available along the Village streets surrounding the festival area.

Posters:
Posters were available at various venues in Manatee County advertising the event.

Music:
Live music was provided at various locations throughout the festival.

Sponsors:
Local businesses and organizations sponsored the event, providing financial support for the festival.

Admission:
A $3 entrance fee was charged for adults and children age 12 and older. Children under 12 were admitted free.

Restrooms:
Restrooms were available throughout the festival area.

Exhibits:
Exhibits were set up by various local organizations and businesses, showcasing their products and services.

Entertainment:
Live music and other performances were featured throughout the festival.

Operations:
MCSAC assessors observed the event from multiple perspectives, including festival vendors, event organizers, and attendees.

Youth:
MCSAC also observed the behavior of children and youth attending the event, ensuring a safe and family-friendly atmosphere.

Refreshments:
A variety of food and beverage vendors were available, providing a range of options for attendees.

Ticketing:
Ticketing was managed at clearly identified booths, ensuring a smooth flow of visitors.

Security:
Security personnel were present throughout the event, ensuring the safety of attendees.

Environment:
The environmental scan revealed various aspects of the festival, including alcohol advertising and promotion, alcohol sponsorship logos, and alcohol advertising and promotion.

Festivals:
The festival was a popular event, attracting large crowds and generating significant economic benefits for the local community.

Healthcare:
The event provided a platform for promoting healthcare, with various health-related exhibits and demonstrations.

Safety:
Safety measures were implemented throughout the event, including fence walls and barriers.

Services:
The festival offered a range of services, including food and beverage vendors, live music, and other entertainment options.

Transportation:
Transportation options were available, including shuttle buses and other convenient transportation services.

Venue:
The venue was well-maintained, providing a comfortable and enjoyable experience for attendees.

Volunteers:
Volunteers were present throughout the event, contributing to the success of the festival.

Water:
Water stations were available throughout the festival area, ensuring attendees had access to fresh water.

Youth Targeted Activities:
The children’s play area was casually defined and not closely monitored. Patrons were observed walking through the children’s play area carrying alcoholic beverages.

The presence of alcohol and rival gang members, as well as limited vendor compliance, makes this a potentially risky event.
A sufficient police presence was carried alcohol logos throughout the festival.

Sale of Alcohol: Festival alcohol vendors sold drinks in clear plastic cups. Restaurants sold drinks in bottles, cans and plastic cups. Some vendors charged $2 for 16 oz draft and $2 for sodas or water. Canned soda was $1. One restaurant vendor sold rum in a coconut for 7-8 tickets or $5 cash. Many festival participants were observed carrying canned and bottled alcohol drinks. There were no beer gardens or designated alcohol service areas. There were no “We I. D.” signs posted. After a law enforcement officer questioned alcohol servers, a red stamp was produced and identified as the method of ID’ing those approved to purchase alcoholic beverages. However, during several hours of observation, few patrons were observed showing ID for service. Several young-looking patrons were observed with multiple alcoholic drinks in hand. Patrons were observed to purchase two and three drinks at one transaction and hand off drinks to young-looking festival participants. No cut off time for alcohol service was posted and service continued until the end of the festival.

Options for Consideration for the Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival

1. Request that volunteer servers of alcoholic beverages attend a free training by MCSAC trainers. MCSAC also has ID scanning equipment that can be used by festival servers at no cost.
2. Limit sales of alcoholic beverages per transaction to two. Servers of alcoholic beverages should refrain from selling drinks to patrons already carrying alcoholic beverages into the service area. Assessors observed as many as 6 drinks handled by one patron who subsequently handed off drinks to young-looking patrons.
3. Adopt a No Staff Alcohol Consumption policy to maintain the integrity of their decision making and limit the risk of serving alcohol to a minor or already intoxicated individual (which equates to illegal alcohol sales and increased event liability).
4. Post “We ID” signs at every alcohol beverage station and ID all patrons under 40 years of age; issue identifiers such as wristbands and monitor that they are properly used.
5. Post alcohol serving times and cut off alcohol service at least one hour prior to event end.
6. Provide a Beer Garden/designed drinking areas, minimizing access to alcohol by minors and limiting exposure to other event attendees from negative alcohol influenced behaviors.
7. Post and enforce “NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED IN THE CHILDREN’S PLAY AREA.”
8. Develop a process and monitor for over-served patrons.
9. Develop a process and monitor for handing off alcohol beverages to underage patrons.

Taste of Manatee event

Saturday Nov 6th (11AM to 10PM) and Sunday Nov 7th (11AM to 7 PM), 2010

Event: The 24th Annual Taste of Manatee (Bradenton, FL) was sponsored by the Rotary Club of West Bradenton, Bright House Networks, The Bradenton Herald and the Florida Restaurant & Lodging Association. Event venue included Old Main Street (12th Street, closed to traffic at the north end) and along the Manatee Riverfront on Barcarrota Blvd. The event supports local charities and non-profits including the American Cancer Society, Habitat for Humanity, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Pace Center for Girls, Hope Family Services, Our Daily Bread, and Shelter Box.

Advertising: Advertising for the Taste of Manatee was found in newspapers, on TV, on the Internet and on posters and handouts displayed in downtown businesses and throughout the area. Messaging was primarily focused on availability of local restaurant cuisine, expanded children’s activity area and live entertainment, but also included encouragement to “Enjoy a cold drink at the Tiki Bar Tent.”

Parking: Parking was available along the streets surrounding the Main Street area. Even though a primary street entry was identified, no entrance fee was charged as entry was possible from multiple locations from adjoining streets.

Venue: Vendor booths included local restaurant cuisine (more than 20 were observed) and arts and crafts. There were a few vendors selling items, including one vendor selling and giving away tobacco samples. There was an ice carving exhibition, a motorcycle poker run and show, and soft areas to watch sports on large screen TVs. Entertainment was on a main stage and included several popular local bands playing throughout the event. A Community Tent was provided to showcase local nonprofits.

Health and Safety: A sufficient police presence was observed at the event. Crowds were orderly. Trash disposal was well contained at the event. Over-served patrons were observed throughout the event. A vendor selling tobacco and distributing free tobacco attempted to give a member of the Youth Leadership Academy free tobacco. The Academy member was underage and did not ask for the tobacco. The incident was reported to law enforcement and the vendor was cited by Bradenton Police.

Advertising:

Youth Targeted Activities: There was an active and monitored Children’s Play Area with a touch pool, pounce house, and other unique activities. Adults were observed with alcoholic beverages in this area. Overall the Cortez Fishing Festival was well-run, well-organized, had sufficient trained volunteers with designated duties and more than adequate monitoring for safety and cleanliness, making this a family-friendly event.
Alcohol Advertising and Promotion: Festival sales of alcohol were approximately 40% of observed vendor booths; almost every other vendor was an alcohol vendor. One of the observed promotions highlighted a new activity: “Joining the action is the first-ever Drinks of Manatee. Hours are 4-10 p.m. Saturday and 1-7 p.m. Sunday on Old Main Street. It’s like a beer taste but with liquor and wine, too!” Primary sponsorship from a local distributor provided alcohol logos that were observed at the entrance and throughout the festival. The seating areas set aside for food service had alcohol logos displayed everywhere. Even condiments e.g. catsup and mustard, were in containers with alcohol logos.

Sale of Alcohol: Alcohol vendors sold drinks in bottles and cans. Tickets were sold for $1/ticket for the purchase of alcohol and food. Drinks cost $3 for 16 oz draft, $4 for aluminum bottles, $4 for bottled beer and for wine coolers. Sodas were priced at $2 for 24 oz or $1 for 12 oz soda or water. There were no beer gardens. There was a large tent for serving beer and other alcoholic beverages but there was no security monitoring to prevent underage patrons from entering the tent. Alcohol servers were observing drinking alcoholic beverages while serving patrons. There were no “We I.D.” signs posted. No special designated markings were used to identify patrons of legal drinking age. No cut off time for alcohol service was posted and service continued until the end of the event. Assessors did not observe any patron being asked to show their I.D. in order to be served. Patrons were allowed to purchase multiple drinks during a single transaction. Many festival participants were observed carrying canned and bottled alcohol drinks throughout the venue including the Children’s Activity Area.

Youth Targeted Activities: The Children’s Activity Area was extensive and included inflatable, rock climbing walls, a ‘Quad Power Jump’, and Euro Bubbles – large inflatable balls with a zipper that are blown up for each child as they then try to walk around in a shallow pool of water. Area adequately monitored.

Options for Consideration for the Taste of Manatee event:

1. Request that volunteer servers of alcoholic beverages attend a free training by MCSAC trainers. MCSAC also has ID scanning equipment that can be used by festival servers at no cost.
2. Adopt a No Staff Alcohol Consumption policy to maintain the integrity of their decision making and limit the risk of serving alcohol to a minor or already intoxicated individual (which equates to illegal alcohol sales and increased event liability)
3. Limit sales of alcoholic beverages per transaction to two. Servers of alcoholic beverages should refrain from selling drinks to patrons already carrying alcoholic beverages into the service area
4. Post “We ID” signs at every alcohol beverage station and ID all patrons under 40 years of age. No cut off time for alcohol service was posted and service continued until the end of the event. Assessors did not observe any patron being asked to show their I.D. in order to be served. Patrons were allowed to purchase multiple drinks during a single transaction. Many festival participants were observed carrying canned and bottled alcohol drinks throughout the venue including the Children’s Activity Area.
5. Post alcohol serving times and cut off alcohol service at least one hour prior to event end
6. Provide a Beer Garden/designated drinking areas, minimizing access to alcohol by minors and limiting exposure to other event attendees from negative alcohol influenced behaviors
7. Develop clear and consistent standards for merchandise to be sold at the festival and request vendor compliance e.g. no tobacco
8. Lessen the advertising of alcoholic beverages in the dining area to 50% or less.
9. Post and enforce “NO ALCOHOL ALLOWED IN THE CHILDREN’S PLAY AREA”
10. Develop a process and monitor for over-served patrons

In order to effect community policy change it is critical to establish relationships, identify committed team members, understand the self interest of a broad base of stakeholders, and establish credibility. It is important when gathering an advocacy team together to identify people’s motivation for working on an issue. Some saw our efforts as a piece of the puzzle to creating a cultural change toward alcohol, others saw it as an effort to keep our local community safe, and yet others were motivated by working on policy. Each team member may have had a different reason for joining, but ultimately, they were motivated to help prevent illegal sales and over-selling of alcohol at community festivals and events.

Law enforcement played a useful and supportive role in all of the festival monitoring activities. Law enforcement officials provided insights that informed decisions, helped to illustrate severity of existing and potential problems, and provided credibility for the teams’ agendas with community members and, ultimately, elected officials. Officers were instrumental behind the scenes in advising the group and garnering support. We suggest that groups working with festivals meet with local law enforcement to share information and build relationships and obtain law enforcement support and buy-in early in the process.

Alcohol vendors were private organizations at all monitored festivals. Festival and event organizers must avoid the error of assuming that there are no risks attached to the holding of a festival or event because it has been running for many years without a problem. A fundamental legal principle applied to events is that of taking all reasonable care to avoid acts or omissions that could cause injury. Framing the issue as liability reduction and prevention may help festival and event organizations to overcome any initial defensiveness.

MCSAC believes that festival and event organizers have a ‘duty of care’ to the people who are directly affected by or involved in the event; this means taking actions that would prevent any foreseeable risks of injury. This ‘duty of care’ extends to the event staff, volunteers, the performers, contractors, the audience or spectators and the public in the surrounding areas. It is important to maintain positive relationships all around: we must all continue working and living together in our neighborhoods and we can all be a positive force for community safety.
You may say that your festival/event is just a small annual/seasonal experience for your community or neighborhood, and that you do not need a big plan or lots of policies. To adopt that viewpoint is to under-sell the importance of your festival or event and in so doing, you may well miss out on the opportunity for your festival/event to grow into an enhanced experience for your community and visitors alike.

Research has shown that changing the conditions of availability - for example restricting alcohol sales - can help prevent or reduce problems and your liability. Such restrictions can range from eliminating alcohol sales, limiting serving sizes, reducing the hours of sale or confining alcohol consumption to a beer garden. Policies to reduce alcohol problems to reduce liability and elevate prevention at any community festival include:

- Limit the number of places to purchase alcohol at the event
- Provide alternate sponsors and limit alcohol advertising
- Require servers trained in responsible beverage service for all alcohol sales
- Limit serving size and number of servings per patron per purchase
- Do not allow people to bring alcohol into the event
- Allow only plastic cups - no bottles or cans
- Offer attractive, nonalcoholic beverages at competitive prices
- Confine alcohol sales and consumption to enclosed “adult only” beer gardens
- Use trained security personnel to check IDs

**Recommendations for Policy Makers**

Results from the YLA’s Festival Monitoring project clearly reveals a number of issues and concerns across all festivals that could be best addressed through a more comprehensive approach to policy change, well above the festival-organizing level. There is value in working on citywide, countywide, and/or statewide policies so that all festivals in the community would be covered under the same policy. Adopting city or county-level policies decreases risks of alcohol-related problems at all events in our community and also takes the focus off of any individual event so that its planners are less likely to feel singled out.

The combined economic impact of underage drinking and adult alcohol misuse in Florida is estimated at $15.3 billion per year (2007 dollars). About 40% of these costs ($6.12 billion) are incurred by the government. Over the past decade, alcohol excise taxes have contributed an average of about $570 million per year to Florida’s general revenue, which is less than 10% of the $6 billion expended by government to cover the costs of underage drinking and alcohol abuse. MCSAC supported HB105 (Rep. Tom Goodson, R – Rockledge) and SB 746 companion bill (Sen. Thad Altman, R – Rockledge) during the 2011 Legislative Session that passed, amending Florida Statute 856.015 on open house parties. However, we note the following continuing gaps in Florida alcohol laws that have the potential to reduce the economic impact of underage drinking and adult alcohol misuse:

**Conclusions/Options for Consideration by Festival Organizers**

**Gaps in Florida Alcohol Laws**

**Drink Specials:** Only 11 states have no restrictions on drink specials or happy hours. FL has no law restricting free or cheap drink specials. Reference - Iowa White Paper- High Risk Drinking on College Campuses [http://www.iowaabd.com](http://www.iowaabd.com)

**Keg Registration:** 32 states and Washington D.C. have keg registration laws, and Utah does not allow any kegs. FL lacks a keg registration law. Reference - MADD, APIS, CADCA

**Underage Possession:** Youth under age 18 charged with underage possession of alcohol can have their drivers license suspended in Florida. But, this DL sanction doesn’t apply to 18 to 20 year olds that are arrested for alcohol possession. Florida Statutes 562.111 and 322.056.

**Underage Alcohol Consumption:** 34 states/ Washington DC have laws against underage alcohol consumption. FL does not have a law against underage alcohol consumption. In FL, underage persons can be intoxicated and if they do not actually possess an alcoholic beverage, it is not illegal. Reference - MADD, APIS

**Serving Intoxicated Persons:** 47 states have laws: only 3 states – including FL – do not have laws against serving alcohol to an obviously intoxicated person. (Nevada and Wyoming are the other two) Reference - NLEA ABC Enforcement

**Dram Shop Law:** FL has a weak dram shop law with regards to liability for serving obviously intoxicated adults ages 21 and up. FL law relieves server/ owner of liability unless the intoxicated person served is known to be habitually addicted to alcohol. (Florida Statutes 768.125)

**Public Intoxication:** Florida doesn’t have a law against public intoxication.

**Age 21 Restriction in Bars:** Florida allows 18 to 20 year olds to patronize and bartend in bars. In other states, the minimum age is 21. Fourteen FL cities/ counties (including Manatee) have local “21 and up” bar ordinances.

**Alcohol Advertising:** There are no state statutes that restrict alcohol advertising signs in stores or alcohol ads on billboards in FL.

**Responsible Vendor Training:** The Florida Responsible Vendor Training law is voluntary and grants mitigation of penalties to participating establishments when they break underage drinking laws, and helps protect their license. Other states have mandatory responsible vendor training laws. The current FL Responsible Beverage Training statutes also do not address “serving obviously intoxicated persons”. Florida Statutes 561.705 and 561.706, APIS

**Mandatory Warning Signs Regarding Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS):** 23 States / D.C. require FAS warning signs posted at establishments. Florida doesn’t require warning signs. APIS

**Social Host:** In May 2011, the FL Legislature passed HB 105/SB 746 and Gov. Scott signed into law this statute that addresses social host civil liability by increasing penalties on adults who knowingly allow house parties to take place where minors possess or consume alcohol or drugs.

**Other Recommendations:** The Florida penalties against bars/ restaurants that violate the alcoholic beverage laws need to be strengthened. Few non-compliant bars have their liquor licenses suspended or revoked or have significant fines levied. More DABT agents and more DABT or local jurisdiction funding may be needed for inspection of alcohol establishments, enforcement of alcohol laws and vendor education.
References

N.L.E.A Alcohol Beverage Control Enforcement This research report summarizes various laws surrounding Alcohol Beverage Enforcement, particularly in relation to minors. h t t p : / / w w w . n l l e a . o r g / r e p o r t s / ABCEnforcementLegalResearch.pdf

(Adapted from the Florida Coalition for Alcohol Policy May 2011. Contact: er.snelling@verizon.net web: www.myfcap.org)

Finally, increased state alcohol taxes should be considered. Several studies have shown that alcohol taxes affect drinking behaviors, but few studies have looked at the effects of taxes on alcohol-related death. Researchers from the University of Florida analyzed the effects of multiple changes in alcohol tax rates in Florida from 1969 to 2004 on disease-related mortality, and found that raising alcohol taxes would prevent 600 to 800 deaths per year caused by alcohol-related diseases. The study did not include deaths from alcohol-related accidents, crime, or violence. The study, published in the journal Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research, was conducted by Mildred M. Maldonado-Molina, Ph.D., and Alexander C. Wagenaar, Ph.D., of the Department of Epidemiology and Health Policy Research, University of Florida, College of Medicine, Gainesville.

The last time alcohol taxes were raised in Florida was in 1981, when the per-gallon tax on beer increased from $0.40 to $0.48, the per-gallon wine tax went from $1.75 to $2.25, and the per-gallon tax on spirits went from $4.75 to $6.50. Wagenarr points out that due to inflation, Florida’s alcohol taxes are a quarter of what they were in the 1960s, so returning them to the 1960s levels would save about 1,500 lives per year. The study estimates that a 10 percent increase in tax would lead to a 22 percent decline in alcohol-related deaths. The study shows that raising taxes on alcohol can lower the death rate from cirrhosis of the liver, pancreatitis, gastric diseases, certain cancers, and cardiovascular disease.

Sources:
Science Daily, Alcohol Taxes Can Reduce Death Rates Among Chronic Heavy Drinkers, August 9, 2010

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES
Contact Rita Chamberlain, MCSAC Coalition Coordinator, at rchamberlain@drugfreemanatee.org in order to:

- Partner on Festival or Event Planning using Best Practices
- Request information about - or request MCSAC to conduct - a Festival Scan
- Schedule a Responsible Server (PREP) training
- Secure the loan of ID scanning equipment for your event

More information on all of these options, and additional community resources, are available on the Coalition’s website at www.drugfreemanatee.org
### NAME OF EVENT: [INSERT NAME]

### LOCATION/CITY: [INSERT LOCATION/CITY]

### DATE: [INSERT DATE]

### ARRIVAL: [INSERT ARRIVAL]

### DEPARTURE: [INSERT DEPARTURE]

### STAFF

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AGE</th>
<th>ASSESSOR(S)</th>
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### AGE

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<th>COMMUNITY ASSESSOR(S)</th>
<th>AGE</th>
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### ADVERTISING AND PUBLICITY: OFF SITE

Did you see or hear advertising for this event?  Yes ☐, No ☐

If so, where?  ☐ Radio ☐ TV ☐ Newspaper/magazine ☐ Internet

If so, do you recall alcohol in the advertisement?  Yes ☐, No ☐

(i.e. “Budweiser proudly presents...”, or an alcohol logo in the print ad) If yes, which alcohol brand(s)?

### PARKING AREA: ENTRANCE TO VENUE - Did you Observe:

- People loitering in cars/parking lot?  Adults ☐, Minors ☐, No one ☐
- Empty alcohol containers?  Many ☐, Few ☐, None ☐, N/A ☐
- Alcohol consumption in parking lot?  Adults ☐, Minors ☐, None ☐
- Parking area was:  Lighted ☐, Patrolled ☐, Organized ☐

Clear posting of rules, especially about alcohol, at entrance gate?  Many ☐, Few ☐, None ☐, N/A ☐

Staff at the entrance:  Volunteers ☐, Security ☐, None ☐, Lighted ☐, N/A - No specific entrance to event ☐

An entrance fee taken at the door?  Yes ☐, No ☐

Were bags searched at entrance?  Yes ☐, No ☐

Were coolers searched at entrance?  Yes ☐, No ☐

### ALCOHOL ADVERTISING AND PROMOTIONS: Mark all that apply

- Alcohol Banners: List Companies ☐
- Inflatable’s ☐
- Promotional gifts ☐
- Promotional Personnel (Miller/Barcardi Girls) ☐
- Stage Sponsorship ☐
- Emcee Mentions ☐
- Free Samples ☐

Promotions given to minors by alcohol vendors?  Yes ☐, No ☐

If yes, which brand?

### EVENT SPONSORSHIP - mark all that apply:

- Local Community Businesses ☐
- Corporations ☐
- Service Clubs ☐
- Alcohol Industry ☐

Were any alcohol banners at youth/kid’s eye level?  Yes ☐, No ☐, N/A ☐

Were alcohol logos larger than other sponsor logos?  Yes ☐, No ☐, N/A ☐

### SPONSORSHIP BANNER RATIO - Count 10 banners in three locations and note percentage of banners containing alcohol logos and those without. Do not conduct banner counts in beer gardens.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Alcohol</th>
<th>Non-Alcohol</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Three</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Do you feel any banners/posters specifically targeted any of the following groups? Please check all that apply and provide alcohol brand next to the group targeted.

- Hispanics/Latinos ☐
- Blacks/African Americans ☐
- American Indians ☐
- Asians ☐
- Whites/Caucasians ☐
- Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders ☐
- Adults (over 21) ☐
- Youth (under 21) ☐

### HEALTH AND SAFETY RISKS

Did you observe alcohol passed to a minor?  Yes ☐, No ☐

Were intoxicated person(s) observed?  Yes ☐, No ☐

If yes, did security/law enforcement address the individual(s)?  Yes ☐, No ☐

Was transportation arranged for intoxicated individuals?  Yes ☐, No ☐

Did you observe any illegal drug activity (consumption or sale)?  Yes ☐, No ☐

Was drug induced behavior observed?  Yes ☐, No ☐

If yes, did security/law enforcement address the individual(s)?  Yes ☐, No ☐

Was drug paraphernalia available for purchase at this event?  Yes ☐, No ☐

Were there “adult only” vendors at this event?  Yes ☐, No ☐

Did there appear to be adequate security, good crowd control, safe pedestrian paths?  Yes ☐, No ☐

Were fights, falls or accidents observed?  Yes ☐, No ☐

If yes, did security/law enforcement address the individual(s)?  Yes ☐, No ☐

Were there paramedics, ambulances or other health professionals on premises?  Yes ☐, No ☐
Briefly describe any observations between “young looking” event goers and service alcoholic beverages:

Briefly describe observations if adults at the event and service of alcohol (quantity, refusal of service):

AVAILABILITY OF NON-ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES:

Upon entering the event, do you pass a soda/water vendor before a beer vendor? Yes  No
Did the event layout make it conducive to purchasing non-alcoholic beverages? Yes  No

SALE OF ALCOHOL - Please complete this section for each booth/trailer or beer garden at event. Attach additional sheets as necessary.

Number of total alcohol vendors? Location of alcohol vendor area #1:
Select best description for this location: Beer Garden Alcohol booth/trailer Food concession
Was minimum drinking age posted? Yes  No
Were alcohol sales hours posted? Yes  No  If yes, were sales hours enforced? Yes  No
Was a policy on number of drinks per patron/transaction posted? Yes  No  If yes, was it strictly enforced? Yes  No
Did you observe alcohol served to intoxicated customer(s)? Yes  No
Was event staff observed consuming alcoholic beverages while serving alcohol/on duty? Yes  No
Was security personnel posted at/near sales location (observed sale)? Yes  No
Did you observe any alcohol given away without monetary/ticket exchange? Yes  No
Who sponsors (or operates) this alcohol sales location?

How was age verified?
- Alcohol Servers Checked IDs
- IDs checked & wristbands issued at a specific location/booth
- Beer Garden Entrance Staff/Volunteers
- Other ________________________________
Was age verification consistently conducted among attendees appearing under the age of 30? Yes  No

If wristbands were issued-mark all that apply:
- Non-Transferable application (assessor)
- Transferable application (assessor)
- CONSISTENT Non-Transferable application (amongst attendees)
- Non-transferable materials
- Transferable material

Please complete if alcohol was confined to drinking areas:
- Entrance monitored
- Minimum age 21
- ID Verified
- Perimeters were secure
Were the physical barriers effective in keeping drinkers/alcohol in contained area? Yes  No

BEVERAGES AVAILABLE AT ALCOHOL SALES LOCATION(S):

Non-alcoholic drinks
- Water
- Soft Drinks
- Non-alcoholic beer/wine
- None
Beer
- 12 - 14 Ounces
- 16 - 20 Ounces
- 22 + Ounces
- None
Wine
- 1 - 2 Ounces
- 4 - 5 Ounces
- 6+ Ounces
- None
Mixed/straight
- 1.5 measured
- Free Poured
Alcoholic Drink Cost
- Free Samples
- <$2
- $2.25-3.75
- $4 - $6
- $6.25 +

ARE THERE YOUTH TARGETED ACTIVITIES? Yes  No
If yes, please complete the following:
Describe youth areas: Time and location:
Upon entering, (or within) any youth area. is there alcohol marketing? Yes  No
If yes, please describe:
Is alcohol permitted with in this area? Yes  No

ATTENDANCE ESTIMATION (Count 100 people sitting or walking and note percentage of adults and youth. Please do this in (2) different locations)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location One</th>
<th>Youth %</th>
<th>Adults %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Location Two</td>
<td>Youth %</td>
<td>Adults %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Underage Access

- **ID Check Training:** Training staff and volunteers to verify the acceptability and authenticity of identification in a thorough, consistent manner reduces the amount of access to alcohol by minors. Thorough ID verification training includes learning acceptable forms of ID and methods of detecting fake or borrowed identification.

- **Non-Transferable Wristbands:** The use of wristbands allows for easy monitoring of underage drinking. When wristbands are used it is important that they are constructed of a material that does not easily stretch or rely on adhesives to remain fastened. Quality wristbands that are applied with no more than a finger space between the band and the wrist greatly reduce the likelihood of the wristband being slipped off and transferred to a minor.

- **ID Scanner:** The ID scanner is a portable computer that reads the magnetic strip on the back of driver’s license and certain other identification cards. The use of an ID scanner is an additional and sometimes faster measure to verify the authenticity of a guest’s ID. For a large crowd, this is an efficient means of accurately processing patrons into your event.

- **Security to Observe Alcohol Sales:** Having a security officer posted at the point of sale discourages minors from attempting to purchase alcohol. Additionally, servers can feel secure in declining an illegal sale to a minor or already intoxicated patron with security personnel available to reinforce their decision.

- **Beer Garden/Designated Drinking Areas:** Beer gardens allow for monitoring alcohol consumption by patrons, minimizing access to alcohol by minors and limiting exposure to other attendees from negative alcohol-influenced behaviors. Minors have reduced access to alcohol when beer gardens are used at an event as, typically, they are not admitted to the area and alcohol is not permitted outside the area.

Intoxicated Patrons

- **Hours of Sale:** Ceasing alcohol sales one hour before end of event helps patrons process out some of the effects of alcohol before driving away from your event. Post the times of alcohol sales so that patrons know ahead of time when sales will end, especially if tickets, coupons or other scrip is used for purchases. This also reduces patron arguments when servers can point to posed sales hours when declining service.

- **Number of Drinks per Customer:** When limiting the number of drinks sold per transaction to two (2), you reduce the chances of drinks being given to patrons who would likely be refused service had they attempted to purchase it on their own. It can also slow down the rate of consumption when a patron has to get in line each time they want another alcoholic drink.

- **Serving size - should be kept to the standards of 12 oz for beer, 5 oz for wine or 1.25 oz for distilled spirits.** These standard sizes for drinks are used throughout the hospitality industry and are the expected portions by alcohol consumers. Bottles and cans are typically 12 oz. The public has been taught the limits of drinking legally by the DMV advocacy campaigns that rely on these serving sizes. In other words, the public has self-identified their “acceptable alcohol limit” based on this standard e.g. they can have two drinks and still drive. However, if a person believes they can have “two drinks” according to the DMV standard they know (two 12 oz beers), but they are served two 16 oz beers, they now have 32 oz of beer instead of the 24 oz they believed to be legal (and safe to drive) in their system. More is not always better.

- **No Free Drinks:** While it may seem like common sense that drinks should not be free, occasionally volunteers take the liberty of gifting beverages to family and friends. Having a “No Free Drinks” policy may discourage this activity.

- **Price (away from intoxication):** When pricing beverages, consider that a patron typically has a designated amount of money to spend at an event. If alcoholic drinks are cheap, people will typically drink more, creating intoxication for them but no additional profit for you! Consider this: say a patron has $20 to spend – if drinks are $3 they can buy six drinks, but if the drinks are $5 they couldn’t buy more than four drinks. The amount spent remains nearly the same but the intoxication will be less and your event becomes safer for the patron and for other attendees.

- **Alternative Product Offerings/Promotion of Non-alcoholic Beverages:** In addition to alcohol availability it is important to have food and assorted non-alcoholic beverages easily accessible. Soda and water are commonly available at most events, but it is a good idea to have them available at alcohol booths as well. Other popular non-alcoholic drinks are specialty coffee beverages and fruit smoothies. When non-alcoholic beverages are available it is helpful to post additional signs or posters to advertise their availability as well as encouraging servers to verbally inform patrons of that option.

- **Beer Garden/Designated Drinking Areas:** Beer gardens allow for monitoring alcohol consumption by patrons, minimizing alcohol access by minors and limiting exposure to other event patrons, creating the perception of a safer, family friendly event. Alcohol servers are more likely to notice the behavior of their patrons when limited to a specific area. When alcohol-consuming event attendees are free to roam an event they are more likely to have multiple servers throughout the event who would not be aware of their prior consumption.

Heavy Sponsorship

- **Percentage Less than 50%:** Signs and banners for event sponsors shape the perception of the environment and how patrons respond to the event: if the majority of hanging banners represent an alcohol company, patrons may lose sight of the real reason for the event. For example, if the event focuses on seafood, and Brand XX Beer sponsors it, Brand XX Beer typically offers to provide event banners. However if the banners all have Brand XX Beer logos (sometimes larger than the event message), it is effectively promoting their beer rather than your seafood, creating a drinking environment rather than an eating environment.

- **Safety Messaging:** Send the message to drink responsibly and always designate a driver. Many alcohol companies are happy to furnish such banners for an event. It is helpful to remind patrons to establish their designated driver upon ENTRY to the event and BEFORE consuming alcohol.

- **Sizing of Logos:** The size of a logo will draw attention to it. When alcohol logos are larger than other logos they can overpower the theme of the event and promote a drinking environment. What message do you want your event to convey?

- **Youth Area:** Alcohol and tobacco sponsorship banners, posters or logos should never be displayed in youth areas. They are not of age to buy the products and promoting these products to underage is, at best, unethical.
Other

- **Policy – No Staff Alcohol Consumption:** The policy of no alcohol consumption among staff/volunteers maintains the integrity of their decision making. Compromised decision making equates to increased event liability.

- **Parking Lot Supervision:** Supervision of parking areas by security or staff can increase safety for attendees and reduce incidents of drinking and/or use of illegal substances by patrons prior to or during an event. Minors will often attempt to consume alcohol in parking areas before entering an event – it is less expensive for them and they don’t have to worry about showing ID.

- **Clear Posting of Rules/Policies at Entrances:** Posting event rules and policies at the entrance(s) of the event sets an expectation of behavior standards for patrons. Policies such as “Must be 21 to Consume Alcohol” and “All Persons Entering Event are Subject to Search” and “No Coolers” send a message that only legal sales of alcohol will be permitted.

- **Staff Posted at Entrance:** Having trained staff (also uniformed security or law enforcement) and volunteers posted at the entrance(s) sends multiple messages: 1) behavior will be monitored; 2) staff is present to answer questions or respond to any problems that may arise; 3) patrons’ safety is a priority; 4) there will be consequences for inappropriate behavior.

- **Minimize Stage Emcee Mentions of Alcohol:** Emcee mentions of alcohol are unnecessary. Invite the emcee to mention the reason for the event and promotional sales of merchandise (t-shirts) that keep the profits coming but do not promote intoxication-level drinking.

**References/Research/Acknowledgements**

- Department of Health and Human Services, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, DHHS Publication No. (SMA) 99-3298
- Drug-Free Action Alliance: Working with Students to Address Alcohol at Public Events, June 2008
- Florida Festival Scanning Training Manual/Project S.A.F.E.R. (Nassau Alcohol, Crime, Drug, Abatement Coalition)
- The PIRE (Pacific Center for Research and Evaluation) Center for the Study of Law and Enforcement Policy, including the APIS, a national database of laws and enforcement policy, and the National Center for Alcohol Law Enforcement database. www.pire.org
- Cortez Commercial Fishing Festival photography: Thomas Bender (web site)

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