

# THE EXCELLENCE PROJECT (EP)

*A community collaboration working towards the continual reduction of underage drinking and illegal substance use.*

## ROUTT COUNTY FACTS AND FIGURES—UNDERAGE DRINKING AND HOME PARTIES

### I. States/Cities with Social Host Ordinances (SHO).

- **25 states and countless cities, counties and municipalities across the nation have adopted SHO.**

As of January 1, 2008, 25 states, and countless counties, cities, towns and municipalities have adopted social host ordinances.<sup>1</sup> The states with Social Host Ordinances are: Washington, Oregon, Hawaii, Alaska, Wyoming, Arizona, Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Alabama, Florida, Maryland, Delaware, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Maine.<sup>2</sup>

Additionally, various jurisdictions have adopted these type of laws in states without SHO. For instance, in California, 29 SHO exist in various jurisdictions.<sup>3</sup> Other communities in New York, Oklahoma, New Jersey, and Wisconsin have also passed social host ordinances.<sup>4</sup> Every state in the US prohibits furnishing alcohol to minors.<sup>5</sup>

Anecdotal Research: Why jurisdictions across the nation are adopting SHOs:

- **Task forces across the nation, including the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), recommend adopting a SHO as part of each jurisdiction's comprehensive prevention program to combat underage drinking.**

The NHTSA/Fatality Analysis Reporting System (FARS), as well as various reputable task forces in such states as Arkansas, California, Montana, Oklahoma, and various communities and municipalities across the nation, **recommend and support implementing social host laws**, or more progressive versions if one already exists. The SHO should be part of that jurisdiction's comprehensive prevention program to combat underage drinking, impaired driving, and the other related health and safety concerns of underage alcohol use.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Source: [www.alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov)

<sup>2</sup> Source: [www.alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov)

<sup>3</sup> Source: [www.socialhost.org/cityordinances.aspx](http://www.socialhost.org/cityordinances.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> "'Social Host' Laws Proliferate in U.S., January 24, 2007, [www.jointogether.org](http://www.jointogether.org), referring to the Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center.

<sup>5</sup> Source: [www.alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov](http://www.alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov); "Adults penalized for teen drinking: 'Social host' laws aimed at stopping underage binges," John Ritter, USA TODAY, January 5-7, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> See Highway Safety Program Guideline Area No. 8: Impaired Driving, Page A-1; State of Oklahoma FY 2009 Performance Plan and Highway Safety Plan, Page 11, <http://www.ohso.ok.gov>; <http://www.socialhost.org>, citing National Research Council and Institute of Medicine. (2004). *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collaborative Responsibility*. Washington, DC: National Academics Press, 2004. Available online at: <http://www.nap.edu/books/0309089352/html>; Ritter, John, "Laws crash underage drinking parties," USA Today, January 4, 2007; [http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-01-04-teen-drinking-inside\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2007-01-04-teen-drinking-inside_x.htm); Montana DUI Task Force: Activity Toolkit For state fiscal year 2008: Reduce impaired driving, Montana Department of Transportation; [http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/safety/dui\\_taskforce\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/safety/dui_taskforce_toolkit.pdf); Impaired-Driving Program Assessments: A Summary of Recommendations (1991 to 2003), U.S. Department of Transportation, National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, October 2004, <http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/cars/rules/regrev/evaluate/809815/index.html>;

This comprehensive prevention program **should collaborate** with health, law enforcement, traffic safety, medical, and other community organizations to work towards altering social norms, changing risk or dangerous behaviors, creating protective environments, prevention education programs, and implementing a system of impaired driving prevention activities.<sup>7</sup>

II. Why Are SHOs Being Enacted Across the Country?

- **Alcohol use and abuse is the most prevalent problem among youth in the US and the force behind Former Surgeon General Mortisugu's "Call to Action."**

Former Surgeon General Kenneth P. Mortisugu, M.D., M.P. H. in 2007 issued a "Call to Action to Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking" among our nation's youth to all levels of government, individuals, private sector institutions and organizations.<sup>8</sup> According to the former Surgeon General, **alcohol is the most widely used substance of abuse among America's youth**, used by more young people than tobacco or illicit drugs. The Surgeon General reports that approximately 40% of individuals who begin drinking before the age of 15, later describe their drinking behavior synonymous with conditions of alcohol dependence. These individuals are 4 times more likely to display symptoms of alcohol dependence, as young people who do not drink before 21. Early onset of drinking can be a marker for future problems, including alcohol dependence and other substance abuse.

- **Youth across the nation report obtaining alcohol from both: illegal purchases and through parties.**<sup>9</sup>

Stopping bars, liquor stores and markets from selling alcohol to underage youth is an important goal; however, it does not address the problem of youth obtaining alcohol from house parties. **House parties are the number 1 setting for binge drinking and other serious crimes**, such as sexual assaults and other violence.

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OJJDP Success Stories: News From the Field, "Enforcement and Community collaboration results in a successful ordinance in Highland Park, Texas," May 2006, [www.udetc.org](http://www.udetc.org); OJJDP Success Stories: News From the Field, "Rhode Island's Social-Host Law Follows the Lead of Neighbor States," November 2006; [www.udetc.org](http://www.udetc.org); Transportation Research Circular, Number E-C123, November 2007, "Traffic Safety and Alcohol Regulation, A Symposium," June 5-6, 2006, Irvine, California, Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, [www.TRB.org](http://www.TRB.org); "Drive Smart: Impaired Driving Emphasis Area Team," Kentucky Department Transportation Cabinet, [http://highwaysafety.ky.gov/ea\\_impaired\\_driving.asp](http://highwaysafety.ky.gov/ea_impaired_driving.asp); "Keep It Real," Lexington Family Online, Central Kentucky's Parenting Magazine, [http://www.lexingtonfamily.com/social\\_host.html](http://www.lexingtonfamily.com/social_host.html); "Fact Sheet: Social Host laws needed to protect local youth, reduce underage drinking," Center for Prevention of High Risk Drinking, October 2006 [www.alcoholpolicypanel.org](http://www.alcoholpolicypanel.org); "Adult Accountability for Underage Drinking: The Case for Social Host Laws," Ventura County Limits: June 2005; [www.venturacountylimits.org](http://www.venturacountylimits.org); "Prohibitions Against Hosting Underage Drinking Parties; Alcohol Policy Information System, Period covered: 1/1/1998 through 1/1/2008, <http://www.alcoholpolicy.niaaa.nih.gov>; "Not in Our House: A Nationwide Initiative on Underage Drinking and Social Hosting," International Institute for Alcohol Awareness, [www.centurycouncil.org/lib/downloads/iaa/IIAA\\_Coach\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.centurycouncil.org/lib/downloads/iaa/IIAA_Coach_Guide.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> See Highway Safety Program Guideline Area No. 8: Impaired Driving, Page A-1. Social host laws provide a necessary tool for law enforcement, by allowing officers to address a significant factor associated with underage drinking: parties and gatherings where youth have access to alcohol. See Annual Report of The Task Force on Substance Abuse Prevention, Task Force on Substance Abuse Prevention, September 2008, Page 10; [http://www.state.ar.us/dhs/dmhs/Final\\_LTF\\_Report.pdf](http://www.state.ar.us/dhs/dmhs/Final_LTF_Report.pdf).

<sup>8</sup> See The Surgeon General's Call to Action To Prevent and Reduce Underage Drinking (2007), Section 1: Underage Drinking in America: Scope of the Problem, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov>.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Dan Hicks, "Youth Drinking Laws Save Lives, and Money: Holding party hosts responsible makes parties—and communities—safer," [www.venturacountylimits.org](http://www.venturacountylimits.org).

According to police, house parties connote a crowd of young people, alcohol, noise, property damage and often violence.<sup>10</sup>

Routt County's recent tragedy, which claimed the life of a 21 year-old man, Steven Thomas, on March 1st, occurred at a house party where many underage youth were present. The coroner found an extremely high level of alcohol, 0.3, which is more than 3 times the legal limit of alcohol for driving a vehicle, within Thomas's body.<sup>11</sup> This high level of alcohol directly caused Thomas to aspirate.

- **Early studies in particular focus on dram shop liability as a means to reducing underage drinking and its related consequences.**

Early studies of social host liability focus on curtailing youth from obtaining alcohol from bars, liquor stores and markets.<sup>12</sup> These early studies clearly associate dram shop liability with lower alcohol-related adult and minor fatality rates.<sup>13</sup> The Whetten-Goldstein study did not however, reflect lower minor death rates with respect to social host liability from 1984-1995. This same study did, however, reflect lower adult traffic fatalities. **These connections exist because the majority of the drunk drivers obtained alcohol at the bar and not at a private party.**

In Routt County, and in the nation as a whole, the majority of underage drinkers **are not** getting alcohol from the bars or liquor stores, the subject of dram shop laws and other underage drinking laws, but **are instead obtaining alcohol from house parties or from "social hosts."**

- In **March 2009**, the Steamboat Springs Police Department (SSPD) conducted compliance checks in 13 different establishments in Steamboat Springs with the help of various high school students; of the 13 establishments checked, **none (0)** of these businesses sold alcohol to the underage youth, **generating a compliance rate of 100%**.
- In **September 2008**, the SSPD conducted compliance checks in 12 different establishments in Steamboat Springs with the help of various high schools students; of the 12 establishments checked, 11 **did not** sell alcohol to the underage youth, **generating a compliance rate of 92%**.
- These results are in stark contrast to compliance checks conducted by SSPD 4 years ago. According to Captain Joel Rae, **in 2005, the baseline compliance rate was 67%**, indicating that 33% of local establishments sold alcohol to minors.<sup>14</sup>

- **Home parties consistently appear as high risk settings for youth.**

Although research on the topic is limited, the available research suggests that **home parties are high risk settings for binge drinking and associated alcohol problems.** Very young drinkers are often introduced to heavy drinking behaviors at these events.<sup>15</sup> In Routt County in 2007-08, 6 of the 7 County schools facilitated the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCO), assessing local 7<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> graders about their alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use (ATOD), as well as the risk and protective factors related to this behavior. **HKCO found that approximately 12% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Routt County report heavy alcohol use,** which is defined as binge drinking,

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<sup>10</sup> Source: Dan Hicks, "Youth Drinking Laws Save Lives, and Money: Holding party hosts responsible makes parties—and communities—safer," [www.venturacountylimits.org](http://www.venturacountylimits.org).

<sup>11</sup> Source: Fridell, Zack, "Thomas' funeral turnout huge: Mother of 21-year-old calls community support 'overwhelming'," *Steamboat Pilot and Today*, March 14, 2009.

<sup>12</sup> See Kathryn Whetten-Goldstein, et al, "Civil liability, criminal law, and other policies and alcohol-related motor vehicle fatalities in the United States: 1984-1995," *Accident Analysis and Prevention* 32 (2000) 723-733.

<sup>13</sup> See Kathryn Whetten-Goldstein, et al.

<sup>14</sup> These figures were supplied by Captain Joel Rae and Officer Josh Carrell, Steamboat Springs Police Department.

<sup>15</sup> See National Research Council Institute of Medicine. *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility*. Washington DC: National Academy Press, 2003.

or consuming 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row on one occasion, 2 or more times in the past 30 days.<sup>16</sup> This number increases to **approximately 56% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders in Routt County.**<sup>17</sup>

Law enforcement officials report that, in many cases, underage drinking parties occur on private property, but the adults responsible for the property are not present and/or cannot be shown to have furnished the alcohol.<sup>18</sup> For instance, **53.4% of underage drinkers drank at someone else's home.** Another **30.3% drank in their own home.**<sup>19</sup>

According to the Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault, **alcohol is the number one "drug" associated with the crime of sexual assault.**<sup>20</sup> Sexual assault is not uncommon in Colorado: 1 in 4 women and 1 in 17 men have experienced attempted or completed sexual assault.<sup>21</sup> Additionally, on college campuses, **90% of all sexual assaults** involve the use of alcohol or other drugs.<sup>22</sup>

III. Further Routt County specific statistics related to underage alcohol use:

- **Substance use is involved in 60% of all suicide/suicide attempts among Routt County youth.**

For young people 15-24 years old, **suicide is the third leading cause of death.**<sup>23</sup> Over the last several decades, the suicide rate among young people has increased dramatically. Among the **leading risk factors contributing to attempted suicide in youth** are depression, **alcohol or other drug use** disorders.<sup>24</sup>

In Routt County, approximately **60% of all suicides/attempted suicides** are associated with substance use.<sup>25</sup> Additionally, in Routt County in 2008 there were 13 suicide attempts by youth ages 10-19 years old. **Of these 13 attempts, 12 involved the use of alcohol.**

- **Routt County figures for MIPs and Juvenile DUIs violations are the worst in the state.**

Routt County has the dubious distinction as leading Colorado in alcohol-related infractions, with averages well above the state and national levels. In particular, **Routt County had the most Minor In Possession (MIPs) and Juvenile Driving Under the Influence (DUIs) violations within the state** in 2005 and 2007.<sup>26</sup> In 2007, the SSPD reported that 180 MIP/MIC Citations were issued. From January 1-September 30, 2008, the SSPD reported that 127 MIP/MIC Citations were issued.<sup>27</sup>

- **Youth in Routt County report above average alcohol, tobacco and other drug use.**

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<sup>16</sup> See HKCO, Page 18.

<sup>17</sup> See HKCO, Page 30.

<sup>18</sup> See "Not in Our House: A Nationwide Initiative on Underage Drinking and Social Hosting," International Institute for Alcohol Awareness; [www.centurycouncil.org/lib/downloads/iiaa/IIAA\\_Coach\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.centurycouncil.org/lib/downloads/iiaa/IIAA_Coach_Guide.pdf). See <http://www.MADD.org>.

<sup>19</sup> See <http://www.MADD.org>.

<sup>20</sup> "What Happened? Drug-Facilitated Sexual Assault ("Date rape drugs")," Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Colorado Sexual Assault Prevention, and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, [www.ccasa.org](http://www.ccasa.org).

<sup>21</sup> Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault, [www.ccasa.org](http://www.ccasa.org).

<sup>22</sup> Colorado Coalition Against Sexual Assault, [www.ccasa.org](http://www.ccasa.org).

<sup>23</sup> "Suicide Facts at a Glance," Summer 2008, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), [www.cdc.gov/injury](http://www.cdc.gov/injury); The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Suicide, 1999, [www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calltoaction/fact3.htm](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calltoaction/fact3.htm).

<sup>24</sup> The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Prevent Suicide, 1999, [www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calltoaction/fact3.htm](http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/calltoaction/fact3.htm).

<sup>25</sup> These figures were obtained from Tom Gangel, Regional Director for Rural Colorado West Regional Mental Health.

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.cdhs.state.co.us/adad/Documents/LEAF%20DATA%20RFP%20FY09.xls>, reporting results from the "Testing the Social Norms Model to Reduce High Risk College Drinking 1999-2002 Final Report prepared by the Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division, Colorado Department of Human Services, BACCHUS & GAMMA Peer Education Network, and the University of Denver, January 2003. Note: The Colorado Department of Human Services, Division of Behavioral Health based these figures on 100,000 juveniles.

<sup>27</sup> These figures were supplied by Captain Joel Rae and Officer Josh Carrell, Steamboat Springs Police Department.

- **Binge drinking among Routt County youth starts early.**

Routt County generated above average responses regarding lifetime ATOD use in the HKCO. According to HKCO, **lifetime use for all grades was approximately 73%, with almost 89% of all 12<sup>th</sup> graders reporting lifetime use of ATOD, and around 69% of all 12<sup>th</sup> graders reporting use within the last 30 days.**<sup>28</sup> Additionally, 56% of all Routt County 12<sup>th</sup> graders reported heavy alcohol use or binge drinking, which is defined as consuming 5 or more alcoholic drinks in a row on 1 occasion, 2 or more times in the past 30 days.<sup>29</sup> Also, **approximately 12% of Routt County middle school students surveyed reported binge drinking,** as compared to 34% of all Routt County high school students surveyed.<sup>30</sup>

- **Routt County youth believe that it is “easy” to get alcohol.**

**74% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders and 59% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Routt County reported that it was “very easy” or “sort of easy” to get alcohol.**<sup>31</sup> Research has indicated that one typical way underage youth procure alcohol is at parties where parents and other adults have left them unsupervised.<sup>32</sup> The data on the compliance checks presented by SSPD make it clear that Routt County’s youth are obtaining alcohol at parties and from “social hosts,” and not from local liquor stores and markets.<sup>33</sup>

- **Young people in Routt County also report impaired driving and riding with drunk drivers.**

In Routt County, **approximately 27% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders have driven after drinking alcohol,** and 39% have ridden in a car driven by someone else who had been drinking alcohol.<sup>34</sup>

- **Routt County’s alcohol-related statistics exceed that of the national average.**

These figures are compared to the related national statistics as reported by the survey conducted by the National Institute of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Monitoring the Future: National Results on Adolescent Drug Use, Overview of the Key Findings 2007. This survey questioned 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> graders nationwide about students’ drug and alcohol use.<sup>35</sup> For instance, in 2007, **nationally, 16% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 33% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 44% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders admitted to drinking alcohol within the last 30 days.**<sup>36</sup> 31.8% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders, 56.3% of 10<sup>th</sup> graders, and 66.4% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders have used alcohol in their lifetime.<sup>37</sup> Additionally, 92% of 12<sup>th</sup> graders and 62% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders stated that it is, or would be, “fairly easy” or “very easy” for them to get alcohol.<sup>38</sup>

Based on these figures, it is clear that Routt County youth report higher percentages of alcohol use than the national average.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>28</sup> See HKCO, Routt County Community, Pages 27 and 29, respectively.

<sup>29</sup> See HKCO, Routt County Community, Page 30.

<sup>30</sup> See HKCO, Routt County Community, Page 30.

<sup>31</sup> See HKCO, Page 47.

<sup>32</sup> See [www.centurycouncil.org/lib/downloads/iiaa/IIAA\\_Coach\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.centurycouncil.org/lib/downloads/iiaa/IIAA_Coach_Guide.pdf), citing Jones-Webb, et al., 1997, “Relationships among alcohol availability, drinking location, alcohol consumption and drinking problems in adolescents,” Substance Use and Misuse 32, 1261-1285.

<sup>33</sup> See information supported by FN 14.

<sup>34</sup> See HKCO, Pages 69 and 68, respectively.

<sup>35</sup> See <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/overview2007.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> See <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/overview2007.pdf>.

<sup>37</sup> See <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/overview2007.pdf>.

<sup>38</sup> See <http://www.monitoringthefuture.org/pubs/monographs/overview2007.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> See HKCO versus Monitoring the Future survey results; *Note:* Routt County’s statistics related to the ease of obtaining alcohol are below-average with respect to 12<sup>th</sup> graders surveyed, but almost directly on par with 8<sup>th</sup> graders reported ease, when compared to the national figures published within the 2007 Monitoring the Future survey.

- **SHO is an important tool necessary for law enforcement officers to combat the problem of underage drinking in Routt County.**

Social Host Ordinances give police a tool beyond standard disturbing-the-peace laws.<sup>40</sup> Social host laws increase police availability and resources to respond to other important community needs.<sup>41</sup>

Additionally, following the adoption of social host liability in the cities of Ojai and Fillmore, California, law enforcement within these cities has experienced decreased calls for service to party disturbances where underage drinking was occurring. Decreased calls for service have led to the rapid adoption of these types of ordinances (and the accompanying enforcement strategies) throughout the cities and county of Ventura County, California.<sup>42</sup> Ojai has also experienced a 28% drop in crime in conjunction with the adoption of the SHO.<sup>43</sup>

- **SHO does not increase police power.**

The SHO will not infringe upon the privacy interests or civil liberties of the citizens of Steamboat Springs. Local law enforcement powers, including search and seizure, will not increase due to the adoption of the SHO. Law enforcement are subject to all provisions of the US and Colorado Constitutions, including the Fourth Amendment to the US Constitution, which guards against unreasonable search and seizure.<sup>44</sup> **In accordance with the Fourth Amendment, local law enforcement will be required to obtain judicially issued search and arrest warrants, as supported by probable cause,** except in circumstances meeting the long-standing, judicially recognized exceptions to this rule.<sup>45</sup> The SHO will simply act as an aide to law enforcement to allow them to determine the “source” or “host” of the alcohol and/or the underage drinking party while otherwise exercising his/her duty under constitutional requirements.

#### IV. Benefits of SHO:

- **Proven Outcomes from the adoption of SHO.**

Ventura County, California is currently assessing the outcomes of SHO throughout their cities and county through a formal evaluation process due to be completed in June 2009. However, Ventura County’s jurisdictions have issued in **total more than 145 citations and boast increased awareness of underage and binge drinking,** as well as the related problems to underage alcohol use.<sup>46</sup> Of these issued citations, **73% of the violations were issued to “party hosts” under the age of 25,** and more than ½ (54%) of the persons receiving violations were between the ages of 16 and 20.<sup>47</sup>

In Ojai, in particular, the city’s Chief of Police (and his deputies) report that following the adoption of the SHO in Ojai in January 2006, **the number of service calls for party disturbance where underage youth are drinking have decreased.**<sup>48</sup> Law enforcement in Ojai also reports that between June 2006 and July 2007, 1 in 5

<sup>40</sup> Source: “Laws crash underage drinking parties: Fines intended ‘to get parents to change their behavior’ when their kids want to have a bash,” John Ritter, USA TODAY, January 5, 2007.

<sup>41</sup> See Annual Report of The Task Force on Substance Abuse Prevention, Task Force on Substance Abuse Prevention, September 2008, Page 10; [http://www.state.ar.us/dhs/dmhs/Final\\_LTF\\_Report.pdf](http://www.state.ar.us/dhs/dmhs/Final_LTF_Report.pdf).

<sup>42</sup> Source: [www.venturacountylimits.org](http://www.venturacountylimits.org).

<sup>43</sup> Source: “Ojai Crime Drops 28 Percent at Ojai Valley News Blog,” The Ojai Valley News, February 11, 2009.

<sup>44</sup> Fourth Amendment, Constitution of the United States, <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/constitution/pdf/con015.pdf>

<sup>45</sup> Such exceptions include: exigent circumstances, plain view, searches incident to lawful arrest, and the motor vehicle exception, among several other recognized exceptions to this rule.

<sup>46</sup> Source: Daniel Hicks, Administrator, Ventura County Limits; [www.venturacountylimits.org](http://www.venturacountylimits.org); Captain Randy Pentis, Ventura County Sheriff’s Office, (805) 494-8248, [randy.pentis@ventura.org](mailto:randy.pentis@ventura.org).

<sup>47</sup> Source: Kristen Donovan, Ph.D, Julie Slay, Ph.D., and Lisa Garbrecht, “Ventura County Limits: Evaluation Findings from the Ventura County State Initiative Grant (SIG) Funded Initiative: Ventura County State Initiative Grant (SIG) Year Three Final Evaluation Report.” July 2008, page 13.

<sup>48</sup> Donovan, et al, Figure 1 “Age of Persons Cited for SHO Violations,” page 9.

of those cited for SHO violations had a history of police calls for service for party disturbance.<sup>49</sup> Captain Pentis of the Ventura County Sheriff's Department believes that the **adoption of SHO county-wide has lead to reductions in incidents of other alcohol-related, violent crimes, including sexual assaults**.<sup>50</sup> For instance, within Ventura County the crime index total decreased from 1,512 to 1,487 between 2006 and 2007, while the population increased from 96,016 to 96,102.<sup>51</sup> Additionally, figures for the crimes per day within Ventura County have decreased from 4.22 in 2006 to 4.13 in 2007, and the total violent crimes between 2006 and 2007 decreased from 209 to 184. Furthermore, in the City of Ojai, Ventura County, California, the crime index total decreased from 256 to 187 between 2006 and 2008, while the population more or less remained steady at approximately 8,100 residents.<sup>52</sup> Also, in Ojai the crimes per day decreased from 0.70 in 2006 to 0.52 in 2008, and the total violent crimes between 2006 and 2008 decreased from 19 to 15. It is important to note, that Ojai (within Ventura County) adopted a SHO in January 2006, and in April 2006, Ventura County adopted a similar SHO.<sup>53</sup>

In addition, Ojai reports a decrease in MIP violations since December 2006.<sup>54</sup> EvalCorp and Ventura County Limits are tentative to attribute this decline in MIP charges solely to the adoption of the SHO.<sup>55</sup> Despite this tenuous connection, **NHTSA reports that the traffic fatalities in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes decreased** nearly 4 percent from 13,491 in 2006 to 12,998 in 2007, resulting in a decreased fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles of travel (VMT) in 2007—the lowest on record.<sup>56</sup> In particular, NHTSA reports the **total of alcohol-related fatalities among youth ages 16-20 decreased from 2006 to 2007** from 11% of all motor vehicle fatalities to 10%.<sup>57</sup> In addition, 32 states had decreases in the number of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities in 2007, as compared to 2006.<sup>58</sup> Supplementary studies further attribute social host liability laws with decreased alcohol-related traffic fatalities among adults, as well as decreases in self-reported heavy drinking and drinking and driving.<sup>59</sup>

Research also states that social host liability laws are among the most effective forms of public policy to reduce binge drinking and driving, thereby saving taxpayers money from repeated disturbance calls to police, reduced emergency medical responses to underage drinking parties, reduced injuries and violence, and increased peace within our neighborhoods and protection to private property.<sup>60</sup> The Underage Drinking Enforcement Center estimates that in 2005, **underage drinking cost US citizens \$60.3 billion**.<sup>61</sup> Of this \$60.3 billion, \$39.2 billion was spent on “pain and suffering” associated with the multitude of problems resulting from

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<sup>49</sup> Donovan, et al, Figure 1 “Age of Persons Cited for SHO Violations,” page 10.

<sup>50</sup> Captain Randy Pentis, Ventura County Sheriff Department, and former Fillmore Chief of Police, can be contacted by City Council members at (805) 494-8248 or randy.pentis@ventura.org.

<sup>51</sup> These figures were provided by Stacie Snow, Senior Crime Analyst, Ventura County Sheriff's Department; phone 805.654.2834; e-mail Stacie.Snow@ventura.org.

<sup>52</sup> These figures were provided by Stacie Snow, Senior Crime Analyst, Ventura County Sheriff's Department; phone 805.654.2834; e-mail Stacie.Snow@ventura.org.

<sup>53</sup> Donovan, et al, page 8.

<sup>54</sup> Donovan, et al, page 15.

<sup>55</sup> Donovan, et al, page 15.

<sup>56</sup> “Traffic Safety Facts: 2007 Traffic Safety Annual Assessment- Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities,” NHTSA, August 2008.

<sup>57</sup> “Traffic Safety Facts: 2007 Traffic Safety Annual Assessment- Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities,” NHTSA, August 2008.

<sup>58</sup> “Traffic Safety Facts: 2007 Traffic Safety Annual Assessment- Alcohol-Impaired Driving Fatalities,” NHTSA, August 2008.

<sup>59</sup> Joel Grube, “Alcohol Regulation and Traffic Safety: An Overview,” November 2007, Transportation Research Circular, Number E- C123, Traffic Safety and Alcohol Regulation, A Symposium, June 5-6, 2006, Irvine, California, Transportation Research Board of the National Academies, [www.TRB.org](http://www.TRB.org);

<sup>60</sup> See “Fact Sheet: San Diego Survey on Social Host Laws,” Institute for Public Strategies, August 2003, [www.publicstrategies.org](http://www.publicstrategies.org), citing Stout, Sloan, Liang & Davis, 2000, Journal of Studies on Alcohol; Dan Hicks, “Youth Drinking Laws Save Lives, and Money: Holding party hosts responsible makes parties—and communities—safer,” [www.venturacountylimits.org](http://www.venturacountylimits.org).

<sup>61</sup> Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center, [www.udetc.org/UnderageDrinkingCosts.asp](http://www.udetc.org/UnderageDrinkingCosts.asp).

the use of alcohol by youth (mainly youth violence, youth traffic crashes, high-risk sex, youth property crime, youth injury, and fetal alcohol syndrome among youth mothers), \$15 billion in work lost costs, and \$6.1 billion in medical costs.<sup>62</sup>

Following the adoption of the Social Host Ordinance, Grand Futures Prevention Coalition, partnering with the OMNI Institute,<sup>63</sup> would closely evaluate and assess the ordinance's effect and outcomes on the underage drinking problem in Steamboat Springs, as well as Routt County.

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<sup>62</sup> Underage Drinking Enforcement Training Center, [www.udetc.org/UnderageDrinkingCosts.asp](http://www.udetc.org/UnderageDrinkingCosts.asp), citing Miller, T.R., Levy, DT, Spicer, RS, & Taylor, DM. (2006). "Societal costs of underage drinking," *Journal of Studies on Alcohol*, 67(4), 519-528.

<sup>63</sup> OMNI Institute is a premier social science research institute which compiles research, evaluation and assessments for non-profit organizations across Colorado.