

City: New alcohol sales hours results in fewer police calls

Written by By Deswood Tome Sun Correspondent
Tuesday, 28 November 2017 16:40



Admissions to the Na’Nizhoozhi Center Inc. detoxification services are down by 700 clients since a new law by the City Council was approved in July, city officials claim.

“Gallup police few dispatches regarding intoxicated persons in the morning hours since the new ordinance,” Mayor Jackie McKinney told the county commissioners on Nov. 14.

The city council enacted a new ordinance that prohibits the sale of alcohol before 10 am.

Gallup Police Captain Marinda Spencer says grocery stores open sales at 7 am selling alcohol. “Some businesses begin selling alcohol as they open their doors,” she said.

In 2016, there were 103 emergency calls for persons suffering from convulsions on the streets of Gallup. Calls have dropped to 68 during the same reporting time period for 2017.

Other reports of calls for persons down on the streets have decreased by 112.

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“We have had no unattended deaths since February,” the mayor said. “Calls are not getting back up.”.

Addressing the commissioners on the sale and use of alcohol was McKinley County Sheriff Ron Silversmith.

“The dog in our fight is Sunday liquor sales,” Silversmith said. “Sundays everyone is going out to the bars that are open. They are out there to get their package liquor.”

The city of Gallup does not allow retail package alcohol sales on Sunday.

“I was at Casamero Lake for Veterans Day,” Silversmith said. “I was so shocked to see by 10:30 in the morning people were intoxicated. Three or four people are bootlegging. It happens everywhere. If they want it they are going to get it.”

The sheriff reported that problems are occurring on South Second Street, where a local plasma center is located.

“It’s the reason we had the issues there,” Silversmith said.

Paid plasma givers spend their money on alcohol purchases at package liquor stores reportedly at early hours.

There are 38 full service liquor licenses in Gallup that the state regulation department classifies as dispenser’s licenses, the mayor told the commissioners.

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“We are certainly watching liquor establishments,” McKinney said. Retail sales outlets that do not comply with the law put their licenses in jeopardy, the mayor added.

“There are 33 liquor licensees for Gallup,” Bernice Geiger said. Geiger is the communications director for the New Mexico Regulation and Licensing department in Santa Fe.

“State laws have changed so there is no longer limits over allocation of licenses,” Geiger said. “No licenses are allowed to be transferred under state law.”

A New Mexico law that no longer exists used to allow one full service liquor license per population of every 2,000. The law was changed in 1997. At the time, Gallup had 25 liquor licensees.

A year later the legislature outlawed drive up liquor sales.

“You and I both agree [on] the availability of package liquor in convenient stores,” Commissioner Bill Lee said as the mayor addressed the commission. “We got rid of drive up. But we really didn’t. Get your liquor and get back in your car and go.”

McKinney wants state legislators to change laws on alcohol sales.

“Alcohol should not be sold in a service station,” he said. “If we yell loud enough we could see laws change.”

Statistics the mayor shared on Tuesday were compiled from Metro Dispatch, the communications office for the Gallup Police Department.

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