

From The Beat To The Bench May 2011

Prom Season Be Safe, Responsible and Have Fun

The Vermilion High School will be having their Prom on May 14, 2011. The theme this year is Alice in Wonderland and the public may view the venue from 4:30 to 6:30. Prom goers will begin to arrive at 7:00 pm. Vermilion is unique that they have their prom at the high school and students and guests arrive at the red carpet to a large crowd of spectators. Prom to Dawn parents have worked hard to keep the students safe after the prom is over. In addition, every year we seem to have problems with underage drinking parties around graduation.

Undercover agents with the Ohio Investigative Unit and the Vermilion Police Department have taken an active role in enforcing Ohio's alcohol laws during prom season. The Ohio Investigative Agents will be conducting compliance checks on liquor premises, educating Ohio's high school students through Sober Truth classes and working with local alcohol coalitions and law enforcement to bring awareness to the dangers of underage drinking. The Vermilion Police recently visited establishments that sell alcohol and out of sixteen establishments visited six were cited for liquor sales to minors in the City of Vermilion. Liquor permit premises must carefully monitor underage individuals attempting to purchase beer often times with false identification. Clerks should also watch for individuals 21 and over purchasing alcohol for a person who is not yet 21. In Ohio, it is illegal to share in the cost of purchasing alcoholic beverages with a minor, or attempt to do so, even if the sale is refused.

Anyone convicted of attempting to purchase alcohol as a minor, sharing in the costs, using false identification or furnishing alcohol to a minor face a maximum sentence of six months in jail and or a \$1,000.00 fine.

Anyone under 21 years of age who is caught driving with a blood alcohol concentration between .02 percent and .08 percent can be arrested. If convicted, the individual could have his or her driver license suspended for at least 90 days, up to a maximum of two years and four points would be added to their driving record.

Parents who are hosting a party for their child's friends should also be aware of Ohio's laws and how they could impact them. In Ohio, parents cannot give alcohol to children, other than their own, who are under 21, even in their own home with the other parents' permission. Parents also cannot knowingly allow minors other than their own children to consume alcohol in their home. In addition, the parents may be held civilly liable if an intoxicated underage individual causes an accident.

We want our teenagers to enjoy their prom season and their upcoming graduation. We want this to be a safe time for everyone and that no accidents happen or tragically lives are lost due to underage consumption of alcohol.