



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lindy Bartell, Mindshare Public Relations, 503/860-8062 (mobile)

REPORT WARNS U.S. OF THE DANGERS OF ALCOHOL DEREGULATION

Report Points To Alcoholic Epidemic and Widespread Societal Issues In United Kingdom

(September 1, 2009) – PORTLAND, OR – A newly-issued report warns of the dangers caused by alcohol deregulation and the potential for negative long-term effects on society. Authored by a former Executive Director of the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, Pam Erickson, the report details how in the United Kingdom “relaxed laws have created an alcohol epidemic characterized by very high rates of youth intoxication; large increases in alcohol induced diseases including liver cirrhosis; and frequent instances of public disorder, crime and violence around pubs and nightclubs.”

The report, available at www.pamaction.com, specifically points to the mass availability of alcohol – for purchase 24 hours a day in supermarkets and “mega-bars” – and the significant reduction of price as major factors in the U.K. epidemic and cautions the United States against alcohol deregulation as some mass market retailers seek to purchase directly from alcohol suppliers.

“It is critical that Americans take the lessons from the United Kingdom with great seriousness. Alcohol is a different product that cannot be sold just like any other commodity. Regulation works to prevent practices which induce increases in consumption, heavy drinking and hazardous behavior,” says Erickson.

“Many are just not aware of the public policy safeguards the American system of alcohol distribution has in place merely by its existence,” said Don Aughenbaugh, president of the Oregon

Beer & Wine Distributors Association. “The current regulatory system is a good checks and balances for a product that can be dangerous if sold anytime, anywhere to anyone like bread or potato chips. The system also creates a level playing field – for brewers large and small – which is important especially in Oregon where so many local craft brewers can secure access to market. Alcohol needs to be regulated to allow continued growth of these entrepreneurial businesses while first protecting public health.”

For more than 75 years, the state-based “three-tier” system (supplier/brewer; licensed distributor; licensed retailer) has worked to prevent alcohol from getting into the hands of underage youth; prevent tainted or poisonous alcohol from reaching consumers; and collect taxes.

In Oregon, distributors are bringing awareness to the issue of underage drinking with their statewide Because Oregon campaign (www.becauseoregon.com). Underage drinking in the U.K. is of grave concern, with the report stating that “youth intoxication rates are twice that of the U.S. and eight-year-old British children hospitalized from drinking too much.”

In the report Erickson calls for policymakers, and consumers alike, to take heed of the widespread issues alcohol deregulation has caused in the U.K. and gain a greater understanding about the good regulatory system the U.S. already has. “Regulation works to prevent practices which induce increases in consumption, heavy drinking and hazardous behavior,” she said.

About the Oregon Beer & Wine Distributors Association

The Oregon Beer and Wine Distributor’s Association represents locally-owned businesses throughout the state that provide jobs to fellow citizens, expand the state’s tax base, and provide support to local charities in Oregon communities.

###