

**Responsible Redlands initiative targeting underage drinking**

By [Sandra Emerson](http://www.redlandsdailyfacts.com/government-and-politics/20150828/responsible-redlands-initiative-targeting-underage-drinking#author1), Redlands Daily Facts

REDLANDS >> The Redlands Police Department has issued 78 alcohol-related citations since launching the Responsible Redlands initiative [two years ago](http://www.redlandsdailyfacts.com/government-and-politics/20150827/redlands-police-see-results-in-first-two-years-of-responsible-redlands).

Under the initiative, which is aimed at deterring underage and binge drinking in the city, the department conducts various enforcements funded by state grants.

“I think it’s not one thing that’s going to help people, help the community or at least keep the community safe — it’s going to be a whole host of things, and we’re very supportive of what the Police Department is doing,” said Mario Saucedo, chairman of the Common Vision Coalition, a community group that has assisted in the passage of the city’s Social Host, [Synthetic Drug](http://www.redlandsdailyfacts.com/general-news/20130815/redlands-police-crack-down-on-synthetic-drug-sales) and Deemed Approved ordinances. The department conducts several operations they did before launching the initiative, such as DUI checkpoints and saturation patrols, as well as minor decoy and shoulder tap operations. But in addition to those operations, the department conducts party patrols to enforce the city’s Social Host Ordinance and this year implemented the Deemed Approved Ordinance targeting irresponsible alcohol retailers.

Redlands Police Cmndr. Chris Catren said the work of Saucedo and the Common Vision Coalition has been a huge help in getting the ordinances adopted.

“We can say we need to do the Social Host Ordinance all day long, but when Mario comes and says, ‘I represent the Common Vision Coalition — this is what we want and this is why we want it — then it’s a huge success,” Catren said. “So, him and his group, they have been immensely helpful in getting these things passed.”

The department was approached by officials with the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health and the Institute for Public Strategies, a nonprofit headquartered in San Diego, to participate in the Strategic Prevention Framework State Incentive Grant, or SPF SIG, project.

From there the department created Responsible Redlands, which uses evidence-based policing to deter underage and binge drinking in the city.

IPS provides research and data on ordinances and operations with the same goal.

“We’ve been working in the community since 2007 in San Bernardino County, so we already had some existing ties and partnerships underway,” said Sandra Espadas, regional director at IPS.

IPS works with the coalition as well, collecting data to help identify problems in the community, she said.

“I think just over the years we established a great working relationship,” Espadas said. “We communicate over email or in between meetings, so it just depends on what exactly we’re working on and what information they’re requesting from us.”

When the SPF SIG grant expires, the department will continue doing these operations, Catren said.

“We see it as a success,” Catren said. “We see it as an ongoing thing. When the grant funding runs out, we’re not going to stop doing what we’re doing.”

The City Council in January 2013 approved the social host ordinance, which went into effect the following March, to deter people from hosting parties where people under 21 years old are consuming alcohol or drugs.

The ordinance allows police to cite the party’s host. The penalty for violating the ordinance can be up to several thousand dollars.

“We were trying to impact the parties that occur at graduation time and the message must have gotten across,” Catren said. “We just didn’t have the problem with underage drinking parties we normally did.”

According to the Place of Last Drink survey conducted by the Archs Institute, a program of IPS, house parties are the primary source of alcohol for people under 21 years old in San Bernardino County. Data collected in 2008 by the county show that 37 percent of people under 21 years old who were caught driving under the influence did their drinking at a house party or gathering prior to being arrested, according to the report. Another 36 percent reported they were drinking at a private residence.

“Nine times out of 10, it’s a parent or older sibling that can purchase alcohol,” Catren said.

The coalition raised awareness in the community on the issues of underage drinking at house parties and the need for the Social Host Ordinance.

“We understood there was a need and even the Police Department — they were hamstrung not having the right tools or the right way to address this as they went on these calls,” Saucedo said.

The Police Department has since seen a 31 percent drop in party calls, Catren said.

Catren said that drop equates to 874 calls and 42 percent of a full-time police officer’s time.

“We’re always fighting the battle of having enough officers to accomplish what we want,” Catren said. “The expectation of us is very high, and we always want to meet or exceed it, so how are you going to do that when you’re not going to get a lot more police officers? Well, you make the ones you have more efficient and by not going to 874 calls that were unnecessary, we just became 42 percent of a police officer more efficient.”

Postcards were mailed to families prior to this year’s high school graduation season warning parents about the ordinance and penalties associated with hosting underage drinking parties. The postcards were funded through the SPF SIG.

The City Council in February adopted the Deemed Approved Ordinance.

The ordinance was brought before the council in May 2014, but due to numerous concerns voiced by business owners, they [postponed](http://www.redlandsdailyfacts.com/government-and-politics/20140507/redlands-city-council-tables-ordinance-involving-businesses-that-serve-alcohol) their consideration. After meeting with businesses, the ordinance went back to the council and was ultimately adopted.

Upon implementation of the ordinance, every business in the city that sells alcohol was “deemed approved,” meaning that as long as they follow the performance standards set by the ordinance, they would carry on with business as usual.

But anybody new coming into Redlands who wants to operate an alcohol establishment has to get a conditional use permit, Catren said.

Businesses found in violation are at risk of losing their licenses.

“In downtown you can just open a bar because you want to open a bar,” Catren said. “You go through the system, but you don’t get a CUP, and a CUP is the only way outside of actual code violations, like penal code violations, that we have any leverage over these people to operate responsibly.”

More than 20 communities in the state have implemented Deemed Approved Ordinances, the first being in Oakland in 1993, according to IPS.

The DAO is a mechanism to address the business owners who are irresponsible in serving alcohol to patrons or handling public nuisances, which can lead to numerous calls for service and impact surrounding businesses.

It allows the department to have control on a local level. Businesses still have to follow state and federal laws.

Catren said the department would get an influx of calls for public urination and defecation, thefts from vehicles and other public nuisances related to drinking.

“There might be one or two bar owners who don’t really care about the city and can have an extreme impact on the availability of law enforcement for everybody in the city,” Catren said.

The number of officers in the city has dropped from 98 to 80 since 2007. The department does not have a swing shift three nights a week, Catren said.

“When you have a fight in a bar, it takes everybody we have on duty to have that under control,” he said. “Three days a week we don’t have a swing shift, so there’s five to seven officers covering 70,000 people and 37 square miles.”

Catren said the city’s businesses are interested in keeping Redlands an attractive place to visit.

“I can think of three places in the 20 years I worked here that probably would have run into problems with the DAO,” he said.

Redlands police conduct minor-decoy and shoulder-tap operations to target businesses and people who provide or serve alcohol to minors. Since September 2013, the department has issued 17 citations during minor-decoy operations and 17 citations during shoulder-tap operations.

The department in November received a $18,600 grant from the state Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to conduct shoulder tap and minor decoy operations, as well as operations that target businesses that overserve alcohol or provide narcotics and use of false identifications. The funding is also meant to be used for inspections and community education efforts for businesses with ABC licenses, according to city documents.

During a shoulder-tap operation, a minor under the supervision of police, stands outside a store that sells alcohol and offers adults entering the store money to buy alcohol for them.

Under a minor-decoy operation, a minor enters a business and attempts to buy alcohol. Minor decoys are required to say their age if asked and to provide identification indicating they are underage.

“We’ve had people call the police on our decoys,” Catren said. “We love that. That’s exactly what you want.”

Catren said the department has also received calls from business employees letting them know a minor is in their business trying to buy alcohol.

“I mean you know you’re making an impact when you start to get some responses like that,” he said.

Police conducted a shoulder-tap operation Monday, citing a 39-year-old San Bernardino man for furnishing alcohol to a minor and for two misdemeanor warrants. He was found to be in violation of his probation and was arrested, according to city spokesman Carl Baker.

As part of the operation an 18-year-old volunteer stood outside five businesses that sell alcohol and offered people entering the stores money to buy beer.

Catren said the citations issued during the operations do not come with a high penalty and are not felony offenses.

“These things are not major felony crimes. They are all low-level misdemeanor crimes, but they do impact us,” he said. “It’s trying to send a message.”

Redlands police conduct DUI checkpoints and saturation patrols under the initiative. The department had been conducting these operations prior to launching Responsible Redlands.

In October 2014, the city received a $155,410 grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety to fund a year of programs or special enforcements and public awareness aimed at preventing traffic related deaths and injuries. The funding is used toward DUI checkpoints and saturation patrols, and other operations and training.

According to the Office of Traffic Safety, alcohol-impaired driving fatalities increased from 829 in 2012 to 867 in California in 2013.

Saturation patrols involve a large number of officers patrolling an area looking for signs of impaired drivers.

The department conducted a checkpoint Aug. 20.

As far as future ordinances or operations are concerned, the department has plans to work with the University of Redlands on an upcoming initiative and continuing with their current operations.

“We’re continuing on with the DUI checkpoints, we’re continuing on with all the same programs, and we’re always keeping an eye out for what the next thing is and what else do we need to address,” Catren said.