

# Merced Police Department

# **PRESS RELEASE**

6 September 2016

Sgt. Alan Ward  
209-385-8840  
warda@cityofmerced.org

---

## **Merced Police Department Conducts Minor Decoy Alcohol Sting**

Officers with the Merced Police Department worked a minor decoy sting operation on September 2nd. The purpose of the sting operation is to ensure that businesses are not selling alcohol to underage persons. Under the direct supervision of the officers, minor decoys (juveniles under the legal age to drink/purchase alcohol) enter businesses that are licensed to sell alcohol and then attempt to purchase alcohol.

Ten businesses were visited in the recent operation. Nine did not sell alcohol to minors.

The following businesses did not sell alcohol to the minor decoys:

- Stop 2 Save on Martin Luther King Jr Way
- Carniceria El Bajio on E 16<sup>th</sup> St
- Kwik Serv on R St
- Walgreens on R St
- Dollar General on W Hwy 140
- Shell on R St
- Zoomy's on Yosemite Parkway
- R St Mini Mart on R St
- Savemore Market on G St

Monet Sappho, an employee at Smart & Final, was cited for selling alcohol to the decoys. Sappho asked for ID and still sold the beer. Businesses/persons that sell alcohol to a minor will have administrative action taken against them. Action may include a fine, a suspension of the liquor license, or the permanent revocation of the license or all of the above.

Minor Decoy operations have been conducted by local law enforcement throughout the state since the 1980's. When the program first began, the violation rate of retail establishments selling to minors was as high as 40 to 50 percent. When conducted on a routine basis, the rate has dropped in some cities to as low as 10 percent or even below.

In 1994, the California Supreme Court ruled unanimously that use of underage decoys is a valid tool of law enforcement to ensure that liquor licensees are complying with the law.

Funding for this program was provided by the California Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC). Along with four officers from the Merced Police Department, there were two agents from ABC that assisted with the sting operation.

\*\*\*\* END \*\*\*\*