

STATE & LOCAL

North Carolina Considers Privatization of Liquor

Aleighta Page, Staff Writer

North Carolina legislators are considering privatization of the state liquor industry. Because the state government currently owns the liquor business, the only means of purchasing bottled liquor is through the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission, whose liquor locales are more informally known as ABC stores. Because the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission has a monopoly on the liquor industry, it dictates which brands of alcohol are available and what the prices of those brands will be. The Commission also dictates which restaurants can obtain a liquor license and how much that license will cost.

North Carolina is one of only 18 "control states" that have state government-imposed liquor regulations. Of those 18 control states, however, North Carolina is the only state where local ABC boards sell alcohol and are loosely independent of the state government.

According to a WRAL article written by Gary Robertson, Governor Beverly Purdue has hired a Chicago-based financial group to appraise the liquor wholesale distribution in North Carolina and, as stated in Business Weekly, to evaluate how much of a profit North Carolina could turn by allowing liquor to be sold by private

vendors. The WRAL article claims that the Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission will pay the financial team up to \$175,000 for the appraisal.

Whereas ABC stores are currently run by the state government, if North Carolina were to privatize the alcohol sales, anyone could own a liquor store and make his or her own profit. The idea to privatize North Carolina alcohol sales was first inspired by the discovery of the financial success of a family running the ABC store of New Hanover County; reports say that the family was turning over \$250,000 in profits within a fiscal year. Meanwhile, in Mecklenburg County, one liquor company treated county board members to a \$12,700 dinner.

Aside from benefitting individual entrepreneurs, privatization of alcohol sales would primarily allow the state to financially benefit from the selling of warehouses, properties, industry assets, and other items used in the state-owned liquor industry, according to Leonard Gilroy, the Director of Government Reform for Reason Foundation.

Those people opposed to changing the 75-year-old ABC bill state that it has generated \$259 million for both state and local govern-

ments. The advocates of the status quo also claim that the way in which alcohol is currently administered keeps personal liquor consumption low. They stress the importance of evaluating the possible increase in alcohol consumption and how that increase could lead to potential problems, such as higher alcoholism rates, more drunk driving accidents, and public disturbances. Governor Purdue promises to evaluate these possible "human costs" in considering passage of the new bill before any official action is taken.

Privatizing ABC stores will put the control of alcohol in the consumers' and the sellers' hands. North Carolina legislation has not permitted private liquor sales



Photo courtesy of News and Record

since the days of prohibition, so changing the way the state handles its liquor is a monumental piece of legislation. If passed, the new bill will shake up the social norm that has been established, and it is certain to have a strong impact on how all citizens of North Carolina view alcohol distribution and consumption. The research team from Chicago will present their research to Governor Purdue and other state legislators in April.

What is Sustainability at Meredith College?

Katherine Scott, Contributing Writer

The Green Print defines Meredith College's goals to become sustainable. It also lends a well accepted definition of sustainability. But how exactly does sustainability actually appear on campus?

Is it an edible garden blooming, years after students and faculty worked a Friday afternoon to plant them? Is it a new graduating class working together to plant trees as "Catalysts for Change"? Not just that. It is all the imagination, collaboration, organization and decisions that made these events occur. It is also all the food that the garden will provide and all the services the trees will give.

Is it that Meredith College has an environmental organization on campus? Not just that. It is that Angels for the Environment has many dedicated members who have worked hard to bring environmental awareness to campus. It is also that Angels for the Environment chose to take a risk and

elect a non-science major as their president. Even more so, it is that having a diverse group has made the organization grow to a new measure that stands up to more current environmental needs.

Is it that Meredith College students and faculty worked to complete the college's first Greenhouse Gas Inventory in the semester of Fall 2009? Not just that. It is that a professor took an opportunity that was a risk to use the inventory as an educational experience for a single class. It is also that many faculty contributed information to students, and that some brave few chose to help coordinate and provide support to students.

Sustainability is its associations. It is how Meredith College set its the sustainable goals, how the community always yields sustainable efforts, all of the connections these efforts make and how these connections inspire more goals.

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