

DRAFT Release
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Contacts: John Hatch 512-560-7750

Bedford Group Launches Effort Attract Package Stores Group asks citizens to sign petition calling for May 2020 Election

Bedford--A group of citizens launched an effort to gather nearly 7,000 signatures calling an election so city leaders can recruit a fine wine and package liquor store to the area. The group consists of residents, business and community leaders. If enough signatures are gathered the City Council will be required to order an election next May 2020.

The group supports making one set of rules to regulate alcohol sales in the Bedford City Limits in order to simplify regulations, increase economic growth and jobs and keep local revenue from going to surrounding communities.

When it comes to legalized alcohol sales, State law allows up to ten different versions of 'wet'. In 2005, Bedford voters approved beer and wine sales in grocery and convenience stores. The City was already legal for on-premise sales. The only type of sales not legalized are sales in fine wine package stores.

The petition will allow a vote for the *legal sale of all alcoholic beverages including mixed beverages* in the City of Bedford.

The petition calls for an election to allow fine wine and spirit sales in package store like Goody Goody. Based on a 2008 study by Texas Economist Ray Perryman, Bedford can see a significant increase in sales, jobs and local tax revenue.

Sal Caruso, leader of the local group stated the reason for the group's efforts, *"It is clear our citizens are currently driving to other communities to buy beer, fine wine and spirits, and Bedford loses tax revenues and jobs. Our purpose is to gather the signatures needed to call an election to let the voters decide."*

Dr. Rob Gagliardi, Pharmacy Manager at Albertson's and group member pointed out how much revenue the city could be losing. *"Based on our population, studies show we could be gaining nearly \$11.5 million dollars a year in additional sales, more than 100 new jobs and generate more than \$240,000 in local sales tax revenue. This would allow us to keep those tax dollars and jobs in Bedford."*

In 2008, Texas economist Ray Perryman issued a report documenting the impact elections to legalize alcohol sales have on a community. *“The alcoholic beverage industry is an important contributor to the state economy, supporting some \$36.6 billion in total annual spending and more than 300,000 jobs,”* noted Perryman in his report.

The report released findings on the impact of Texas communities based on population. The US Census Bureau places Bedford’s population at 49,486. Adjusted for a city of 25,000 population, the partially ‘wet’ status of sales allows the city to **currently** receive as much as \$26 million in annual sales and over \$ 600,000 in local tax revenues.

However, the City’s dry status for spirits (package liquor sales), the City could realize as much as an additional \$ 11.5 million in annual spending, 109 more jobs and another \$ 243,000 in local sales tax revenues.

Bedford (49,486 pop)	Current Law Impact	Future Law Impact
Annual Spending	\$ 26,057,348	\$ 11,528,259
Jobs	257	109
Local Sales Tax	\$ 605,709	\$ 243,471

Petition officials in purple shirts will be taking the petitions door to door to give voters the opportunity to sign. Anyone wishing to sign may do so at two Bedford locations:

Business	Address	Hours
1. Postal Annex	2113 Harwood Rd, Ste. 309	M-F 9-6, Sat 10-2
2. What's Poppin Texas	2816 Central Dr., Ste. 125	M-F 10-6:30, Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5

State law requires the group to gather approximately 6,900 signatures of Bedford voters in 60 days. Only those who live in the City Limits of Bedford were eligible to sign the petition.

The group hired Texas Petition Strategies of Austin to conduct the petition drive and election campaign. TPS has conducted more than 350 local option ballot propositions in more than 200 communities in Texas, Louisiana, Tennessee and Ohio.