

LATE ADDITION TO JULY 2024 BLUE AGENDA

- 1) Merrick County Agricultural Society
1784 Fairgrounds Rd
Central City, NE 68826

Requesting to have more than 12 SDLs
for the year of 2024 to fulfill booked events.
SDLs are requested by Retail Licensees.

Do you wish to approve request for exemption of more than 12 SDLs at this location?

Nebraska Liquor Control Commission

301 Centennial Mall South – 1st Floor

PO Box 95046

Lincoln, NE 68509-5046

Members of the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission:

I am writing on behalf of the Merrick County 4-H Building located at 1784 Fairgrounds Road in Central City, Nebraska. This facility is multipurpose and serves the local area in the form of wedding receptions, junior rodeos, horse shows, team ropings, 4-H and fair events, general fundraisers, general meeting space, employee appreciation parties, hospital health fairs, and the like. It is my understanding that the number of SDL's granted for this location has never been close to 12 per calendar year. The Merrick County Extension Office, who handles the general booking of the facility, was unaware of the SDL limitation until it was brought to their attention recently. The issue at hand is the facility has been rented for wedding receptions through November, 2024 as well as a couple other events that will apply for an SDL. It is my understanding there have been 7 SDL's granted for this location year to date. We anticipate at least 9 additional requests for SDL's in 2024, which would total 16. This particular facility charges a very modest rental rate (\$500) and uses what funds it does collect to cover it's costs. The Merrick County Extension Office does not make any money off of the sale of alcohol at these events. The usual applicant for these types of events is a bar or a catering business and the entirety of the profits for the sale of food and alcohol by these applicants goes directly to them. The loss of revenue (although the rental fee is modest) and the harm to the reputation of the facility due to cancellations would potentially do significant damage moving forward.

The Merrick County Board of Supervisors is not in a position to apply for, manage and maintain a retail liquor license. The 4-H building is currently owned by Merrick County and it is the position of the supervisors that the purpose and/or goal of the building is not to be in the retail liquor or catering business. At the same time, the facility was designed and built to serve the people of Merrick County and surrounding areas as there are no comparable facilities in the area that can be used for these purposes. We are asking for an exemption to the limit of 12 SDL's for the 2024 calendar year. In it's most simplest terms, the Merrick County Extension Office would like to avoid the unenviable task of notifying the families that have booked the facility that there aren't enough SDL's to go around and they will have to seek out another venue on short notice if they intend to have alcohol at their wedding reception. We are not requesting unlimited SDL's for 2024. If the Commission would approve the 16 anticipated SDL's for this location in 2024 it would be much appreciated. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter and we offer our sincere apologies for putting the Commission in this position.

Aaron Kunz