



For Immediate Release:

Contact: Carrie A. Christofes, Executive Director

carrie.christofes@nllea.org

724-762-5939

The National Liquor Law Enforcement Association Announces: *2022 Alcohol Law Enforcement Award Recipients*

The NLLEA is a nonprofit membership-based association with more than 1,600 members. Membership represents federal, state and local law enforcement agencies from more than 40 states and the District of Columbia. The NLLEA is governed by a member elected Executive Board. Part of the mission of the NLLEA is to improve the standards of liquor law enforcement and foster an environment of collaboration between law enforcement agencies. One way the NLLEA strives to do this is by providing best practice recommendations and guidance on alcohol policies, procedures and protocols.

At their Annual Conference held September 26-28, 2022 in Pittsburgh, PA several agencies received awards for their hard work and dedication to the field of alcohol law enforcement. Over thirty-five agencies were represented at the Conference to include international, federal, state, local and campus law enforcement along with exhibitors and public health partners.

The theme of this year's conference was: Building Trust Among Stakeholders for Safer Communities. The general sessions and workshops focused on the ever-evolving alcohol market place with increased alcohol access points, increased violence in and around licensed alcohol establishments and the leadership, compliance skills, technology, training and collaboration needed for real solutions.

NLLEA President, Todd Merlina, welcomed attendees to the conference and thanked his fellow board members; Tom Kirby, Vice President, Israel Morrow, Secretary/Treasurer, James Diana, Sergeant-at-Arms, John Yeomans, Immediate Past President and Carrie Christofes, Executive Director for their hard work throughout the year.

"Being able to share this time together gives us the opportunity to not only improve our profession but to create relationships. The relationships we have established and continue to establish are critical to the role our association plays in the proactive and reactive law enforcement process." said NLLEA President Todd Merlina as he applauded the NLLEA membership in facing challenges head-on by thinking outside of the box through collaboration and implementation of real solutions.

The National Liquor Law Enforcement Association (NLLEA) is pleased to announce the recipients of the Annual NLLEA awards given in 4 categories: *Alcohol Law Enforcement Agency of the Year, Alcohol Law Enforcement Agent of the Year, Innovative Alcohol Law Enforcement Program of the Year, John W. Britt Community Service Award and the Meritorious Service Award.*

North Carolina Department of Public Safety, Alcohol Law Enforcement Division, was selected for this year's *Alcohol Law Enforcement Agency of the Year* award. The NLLEA Alcohol Law Enforcement Agency of the Year award is given to an agency that has

demonstrated agency effectiveness through the implementation of innovative programs, community and media recognition, and model training programs, practices and strategies. The North Carolina Department of Public Safety, Alcohol Law Enforcement Division has demonstrated this through a myriad of special investigations, proactive enforcement and education in the communities they serve. NC DPS ALE has also developed and implemented several trainings for ALE and licensed establishments to increase knowledge and foster relationships for safer communities.

This is evident in their agency's accomplishments on many fronts to implement trainings like, Be a Responsible Seller and Stop Alcohol Violence through Employee Education (SAVE). To conduct investigations through special units like, ALE Commercial ABC/Commercial Trade Practice Group, and the Nuisance Abatement Team (NAT). The NC DPS ALE has also tracked their goals and accomplishments through qualitative and quantitative means to measure their increased efforts overall.

Stephen Cox, Agent, Ohio Department of Public Safety, Ohio Investigative Unit was selected for this year's *Alcohol Law Enforcement Agent of the Year* award. The NLLEA Alcohol Law Enforcement Agent of the Year award is given to an agent for acts of heroism or bravery, creativity resulting in innovative programs, recognition by peers and/or the local community, or other actions that enhance the image of an agency or alcohol law enforcement in general. Agent Cox's willingness and determination to go above and beyond addressing drug violations, illegal weapons offenses and violent crimes in and around Ohio's liquor permit premises conveys that he is an exemplary agent and dedicated to the enforcement of liquor laws, regulations and the public health and safety of the community he serves. Agent Cox's successful investigations and impact on gun crimes in the Greater Cleveland area along with his ability to foster professional relationships makes him the ideal recipient of the NLLEA Alcohol Law Enforcement Agent of the Year award.

Delaware Department of Safety & Homeland Security Division of Alcohol & Tobacco Enforcement was selected for this year's *Innovative Alcohol Law Enforcement Program of the Year* award. The NLLEA Innovative Alcohol Law Enforcement Program of the Year award is given to an agency that demonstrates program effectiveness through exemplary practices and enforcement. The Delaware Division of Alcohol and Tobacco Enforcement's (DATE) forward and innovative vision to purchase and implement the use of a DUI Simulator to educate youth and the communities of Delaware on dangers of impaired driving is demonstrative of NLLEA's mission. DATE has also used the Simulator to train officers in pursuit scenarios and to train the alcohol industry (servers & sellers) on the dangers associated with over-service. DATE has creatively engaged youth and the community through the use of the Simulator to provide education on impaired and distracted driving allowing them to foster community relations. This program is having a tremendous impact on underage drinking, impaired driving as well as safe driving. The NLLEA is honored to name DATE's Impaired/Distracted Driver Simulator as Innovative Alcohol Law Enforcement Program of the Year.

Armstrong-Indiana-Clarion Drug and Alcohol Commission (AICDAC) was selected for this year's ***John W. Britt Community Service*** award. The NLLEA John W. Britt Community Service award is given to a non-law enforcement agency/entity that makes a significant contribution to the efforts of liquor and/or tobacco enforcement and demonstrates program effectiveness through underlying efforts and practices. The AICDAC is an exemplary example of programming and partnerships that have made and continue to make contributions to enhance the efforts of liquor enforcement and raise awareness in the prevention of underage drinking through environmental strategies. The dedication by AICDAC in building relationships with the Pennsylvania State Police Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement (BLCE) and educating their communities on the risks associated with underage drinking makes this organization the ideal recipient of the NLLEA John W. Britt Community Service award.

NLLEA 2021-22 President, Todd Merlina, received the ***Meritorious Service Award*** for his four-year dedication to the association. Todd resides in Pennsylvania and is the Division Chief for the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board, Bureau of Alcohol Education. In his current position he oversees educational programs and grants to communities, law enforcement agencies and higher educational institutions. Todd has been involved in the oversight of the alcohol industry for over 36 years. His career has included undercover investigations and prosecution throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as both an officer and a supervisor. In his career Todd was involved with developing The PA State Police Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement alcohol education program "CHOICES", assisted in adapting the nationally recognized program "Cops in Shops" to Pennsylvania, developed and manage the Age Compliance Program, and initiated and coordinated investigative procedures for illegal gambling, Small Games of Chance and alcohol manufacturers.

Award recipients were honored at the 2022 NLLEA Annual Conference held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

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