

## **Local TIPS training held at Hoot-N-Howl**

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The Johnson County Community Resource center, with the Buffalo Police Department, hosted a Training for Intervention Procedures (TIPS) program Saturday to help local businesses understand how to handle certain alcohol-related issues.

“TIPS training is designed to give people who serve alcohol various techniques to help lessen the effects of adult binge drinking,” said Johnson County Substance Abuse Prevention Coordinator Bill Hawley. “We have really been trying to get it going in Johnson County since 2007. Essentially we want to promote a good discussion about health and wellness in the community, and this is one of those steps.”

According to the TIPS Web site the class goes over ways for servers to recognize fake IDs and to realize when customers have had enough to drink without making the situation more volatile. In essence it hopes to help servers recognize the situation and act to defuse the situation.

“I know a lot of these folks and I know how great they are at their jobs,” said Hawley. “With this class we are trying to promote those skills they already have while making sure they have the tools to handle a lot of situations.”

While TIPS training is not required in Wyoming, it is a mandatory training in some states. The class is also a great way for companies to protect themselves and mitigate some of the fines and fees that may be incurred due to infringements like underage drinking.

“TIPS training provides a great ‘reasonable effort’ argument should any problems ever arise in a court,” said Hawley. “Plus there are a lot of insurance benefits to taking the class...but we are offering it with the community in mind hoping that classes like this spark a sort of public dialog about abuse in the community.”

“I think we learned a lot that we didn’t already know about how to judge how much customers have had and things like that,” said Valerie Pryor, manager of the Hoot-N-Howl, who took the class with her co-workers as well as employees of the Wahoo Lickers and The Outback. “I would recommend it to any of the other owners who serve alcohol.”

The next TIPS course will be offered at 8:30 p.m., Saturday, April 10, at Sheridan College of Johnson County. For more information on the class or to sign your business up, contact Hawley at the Community Resource Center at 684-7933.