



# Alcohol Law Enforcement

## NC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY



# ALE Overview & Mission



- ALE is the lead enforcement agency for the state's alcoholic beverage control, lottery, and tobacco laws.
- Take an “All Crimes” approach at ABC and NCEL permitted businesses.
- ALE’s 111 sworn special agents are assigned to 8 district offices throughout North Carolina.
- ALE is the only nationally accredited alcohol law enforcement agency in the country (CALEA).

# Personnel Trends

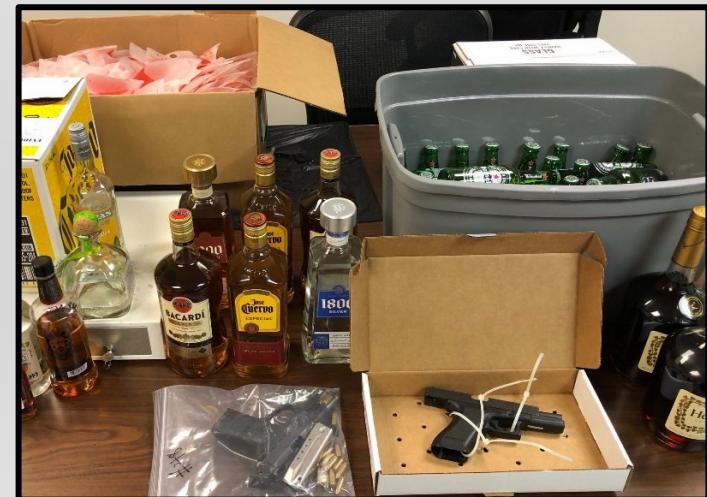
- In 1994, ALE had 117 agents for approximately 15,000 ABC permitted businesses.
- Over the years, ALE has been reduced to 111 ALE agents for approximately 20,000 ABC permitted and 7,000 lottery permitted businesses.
- ALE currently has 12 sworn vacancies.
- Of the 111 positions, 29 positions have been filled by a new employee since January of 2022.





# 2023 Statistics

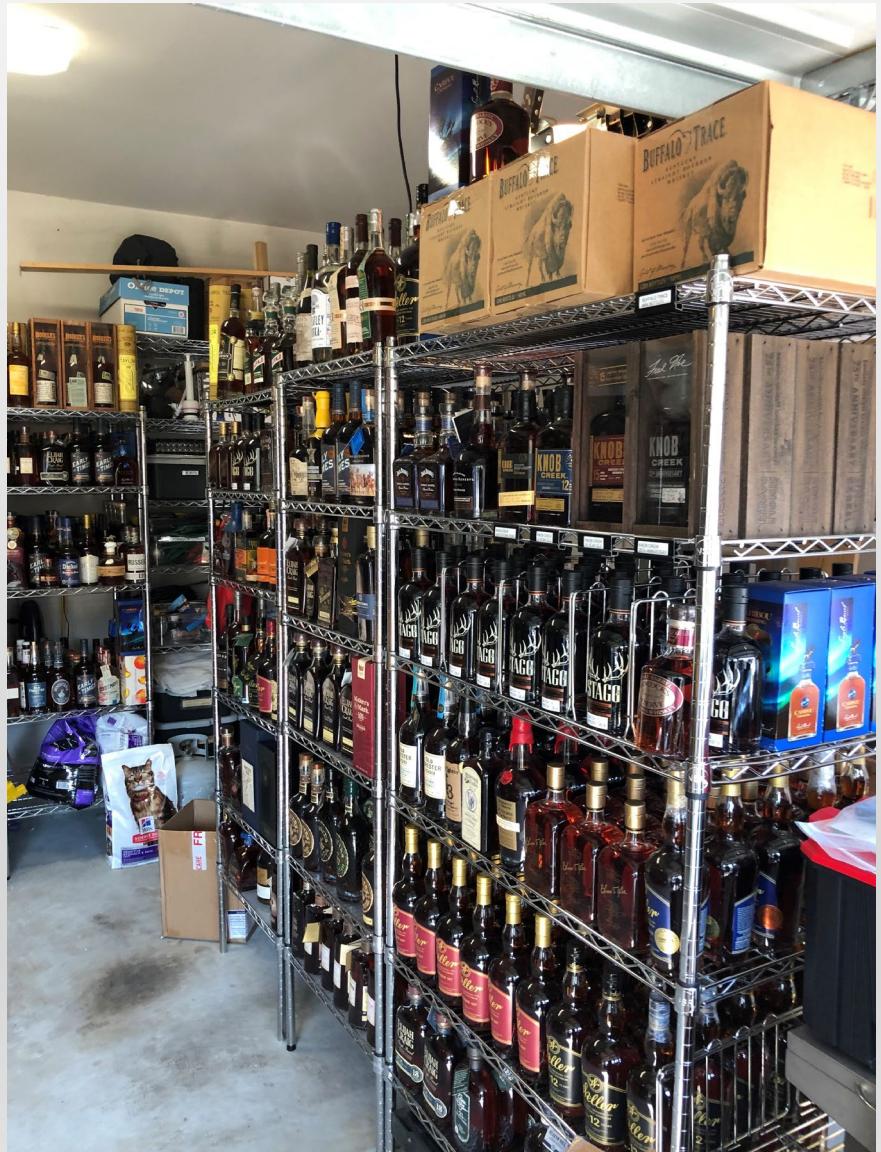
- 4,709 Arrests
- 10,150 Charges
- 1,398 Felony Charges
- 197 Search Warrants
- 973 Violation Reports
- 137 Illegal Outlets Closed
- 555 Educational Programs for 2,780 Participants





# Trends

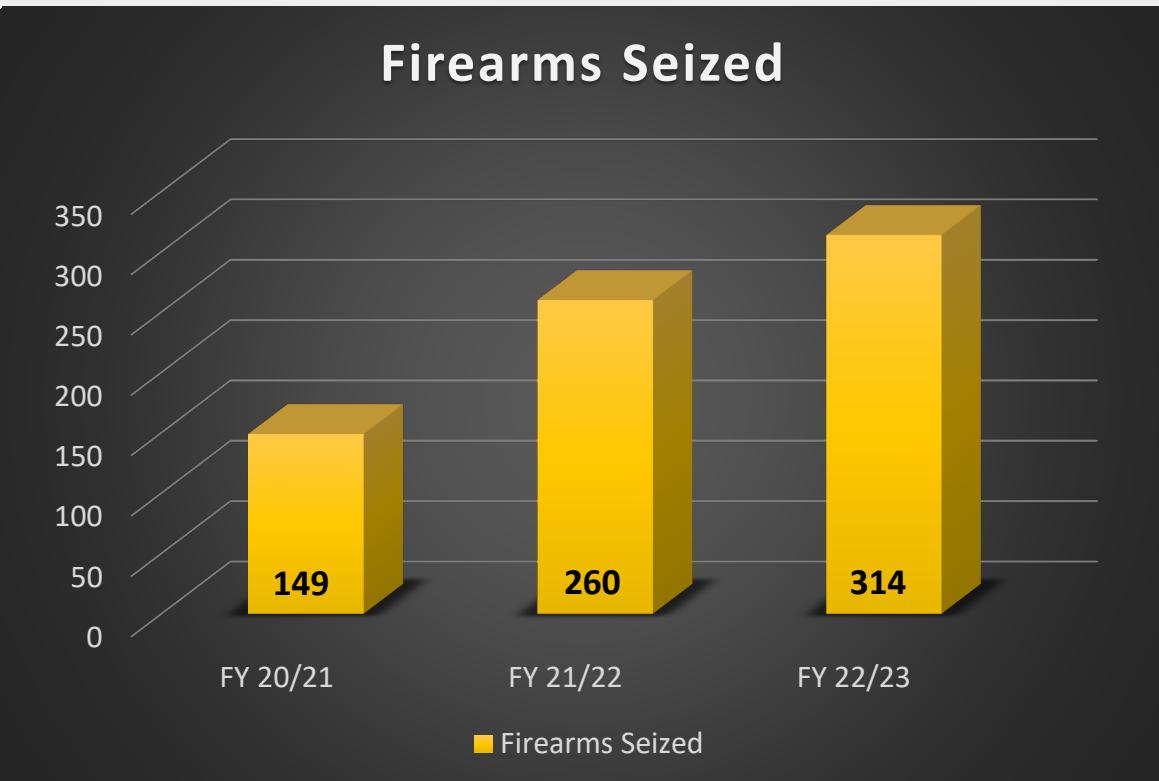
- ALE saw an increase in the number of illegal alcohol businesses from 2022 to 2023.
  - 2022: 85 illegal outlets closed.
  - 2023: 137 illegal outlets closed.
- ALE special agents delivered fewer educational programs from 2022 to 2023.
  - 2022: 708 programs for 3,356 participants.
  - 2023: 555 programs for 2,780 participants.





# Firearm Seizure Trends

- ALE special agents have seen an increase in the number of firearms seized at ABC permitted and illegal alcohol businesses.
- Started tracking in FY 17/18 with 78 firearms seized.
- In FY 22/23, 25% of the ALE Use of Force Incidents involved a suspect possessing a firearm.



# National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN)



- Captures and compares ballistic evidence to aid in solving and preventing violent crimes involving firearms.
- ALE began the NIBIN program in March of 2022.
- Since then, 557 guns have been tested with a total of 48 hits connecting seized firearms to other crimes.





# THC Products



- In the past few years, ALE has received complaints for THC products being sold primarily in unregulated tobacco shops.
- Cases are complaint driven from SROs and other local law enforcement.
- The State Crime Lab does not conduct the necessary testing on these products, so a private lab must be used.
- During 2023 investigations, 65 products were analyzed with 52 of those items (80%) testing above .3% Delta-9 THC.
- Percentages ranged up to 9.79% Delta-9 THC (Montgomery County store).



# 5-10 Year Outlook

- If history is an indicator, the number of ABC/NCEL permitted locations are expected to stay the same or increase.
- If retention is not addressed, ALE will continue to suffer high turnover rates resulting in either vacancies or less experienced ALE agents as well as succession planning issues.
- Increasing seizures of firearms encountered at alcohol businesses has potential to impact agent safety.
- Use of technology for better integration of crime/arrest data.

# Lease & Operations Funds

- To facilitate the full separation of ALE from SBI in 2021, the legislature provided \$557,647 in recurring funds for office space leases. ALE was also given \$683,769 in non-recurring funds to furnish and equip the new offices.
  - HQ and 7 District Offices (Evidence Rooms) have been completed.
  - Final District Office is expected to be ready in May.
- In addition, \$716,023 was provided for 9 administrative staff positions.
- Each district office now has an office manager/evidence technician who assists with the day-to-day operations and administrative functions of the office.





# Civil Unrest Funds

- In 2021, the Legislature provided \$459,130 to equip agents to respond to excessive civil disturbances and related events.
- A portion of these funds were utilized to equip all ALE agents with Avon gas masks, mask pouches, and additional gas mask filters.
- The remaining funds were utilized to fully equip our Special Operations Group (SOG), a team of 13 specially trained ALE agents designated to handle high risk cases.

# Special Operations Group



- The equipment purchased has had a direct effect on the safety, efficiency, and success of high-risk missions.
- This equipment includes:
  - Uniforms, ballistic vests / shields and other protective equipment.
  - Two throw bots, weapon sights, less-lethal equipment, and manual breaching tools.
  - Six SUVs.
  - Medical equipment.
  - UTV and trailer.
- Since June of 2021, SOG has completed 56 missions to include high risk search and arrest warrants, quick reaction force operations, and assists to other agencies.



# Policy Recommendations

- Align resources for enforcement and regulatory authority (sanctions) with any new legislative initiatives:
  - Video Lottery Terminals
  - THC Product Licensing / Enforcement
  - Regulation of Tobacco Shops
  - Jurisdiction Issues in NCGS 18B-500
- Prioritize the retention and recruitment of state law enforcement agents, officers, and troopers.



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# QUESTIONS?