



**For Immediate Release:**

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The National Liquor Law Enforcement Association Announces: *2023 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 an 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 October 4-6, 2023, in Virginia Beach, VA several agencies and individuals 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: Making the Case for Alcohol Law Enforcement. As professionals in this field, NLLEA understands the importance of tracking and analyzing their work, and more importantly, sharing the outcomes with others. This theme will provide a platform for participants to share their insights and experiences, and to discuss innovative ways to improve alcohol law enforcement practices.

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

The NLLEA announced the recipients of the annual awards given in 5 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, Outstanding Contribution to Liquor Law Enforcement and the Meritorious Service Award.*

**Ohio Department of Public Safety, Ohio Investigative Unit**, 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 Ohio Investigative Unit has demonstrated this through a myriad of special investigations, proactive enforcement, and education in the communities they serve. Ohio Investigative Unit has transcended on many fronts by expanding its core mission beyond liquor control law, tobacco, and SNAP (food stamp) violations that includes illegal weapons violations, drug trafficking, manufacturing false identification, gambling, human trafficking, money laundering, conspiracy, and prostitution.

**Officer Brant Mendenhall, Indiana State Excise Police** 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. Officer Brant Mendenhall's work to recognize the need and establish a Digital Forensics Unit for the Indiana State Excise Police demonstrates his willingness to go above and beyond the call of duty. Officer Mendenhall's willingness to personally sacrifice his time and money to earn a master's degree in digital forensics to benefit the department as well as the hundreds of hours he has devoted to creating the newly established ISEP Digital Forensics Unit and draft of the Standard Operating Procedures and best practices guide for seizing and processing digital evidence makes him the ideal recipient of the NLLEA Alcohol Law Enforcement Agent of the Year award.

**Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission's TRACE PROGRAM** 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. TABC's forward and innovative vision to expand the TRACE unit to a full-time investigative unit with 14 agents who can be deployed across the state in collaboration with local law enforcement is demonstrative of NLLEA's mission. TABC's TRACE unit is an innovative partnership program that helps local law enforcement protect their communities while ensuring businesses who break the law are held accountable by state regulators. The program aims to correct retailer behavior, reduce calls for service at those businesses, and increase highway traffic safety.

**Clark County Department of Business License Las Vegas, Nevada** 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. Clark County Business License is an exemplary example of initiatives and partnerships that have made and continue to make contributions to enhance the efforts of liquor enforcement. Their partnerships with the community, tourists, local partner agencies, state regulators, the health district, and the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department that make up the County Multi-Agency Response Team (CMART) makes Clark County Department of Business License the ideal recipient of the NLLEA John W. Britt Community Service award.

**NLLEA 2022-23 President, Tom Kirby**, received the *Meritorious Service Award* for his four-year dedication to the association. Tom's leadership and commitment to the NLLEA have been instrumental in advancing our mission and improving the services we provide to our members. We are proud to honor him with this award of service and dedication.

**Neal Insley, President, and CEO of the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association** was awarded for his *Outstanding Contribution to Liquor Law Enforcement*. The NLLEA would like to express our deepest gratitude to Neal Insley and the National Alcohol Beverage Control Association (NABC) for their steadfast support throughout the years. Their dedication and commitment to our cause have been invaluable in advancing our mission to promote and

improve liquor law enforcement. We are grateful for their ongoing partnership and look forward to continuing our work together in the future.

***Wes Kuhl, NLLEA Past President was recognized on his retirement from the Arizona Department of Liquor License and Control.*** Wes has been a valuable member of our community and has served as the Past President of the NLLEA. His dedication to improving liquor law enforcement has been instrumental in shaping the industry. We wish Wes all the best in his retirement and thank him for his contributions to the field.

Award recipients were honored at the 2023 NLLEA Annual Conference held in Virginia Beach, VA.

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