



ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE COMMISSION

June 20, 2016

The Tennessee Alcoholic Beverage Commission announced today that it delivered, in less than one week, retail food store licenses to over 50% of grocery stores in the state applying to sell wine by July 1st.

With less than two weeks to go, the ABC has also issued conditional "letters of approval" to nearly 80% of grocery store applicants. Stores holding a conditional "letter of approval" are authorized to accept delivery and stock wine.

As of last week, the commission had received 499 applications, sent 398 letters of approval, and delivered 279 retail food store licenses. In other words, 70% of grocery stores holding a letter of approval have received a license in hand as of today, which is issued, effective, and post-dated to the date of July 1st. These stores will be authorized to sell wine effective 8:00 a.m. on July 1st. The ABC expects to deliver additional licenses to the remaining qualified stores in the next two weeks. Grocery stores without a letter of approval are either missing required documentation or were submitted closer to the upcoming rollout.

"We are so pleased that we have completed all the necessary requirements of the application process, and will have all 72 of our eligible stores licensed and ready to sell wine on July 1st", said Melissa Eads, Kroger Nashville division spokesperson. "We are thankful to the ABC and the Tennessee Legislature for their leadership in bringing wine to retail food stores in Tennessee. Wine has been one of the most requested items in our stores for years, so we know our customers are looking forward to this as well."

State legislators and industry representatives in previous weeks had expressed concern over the rollout of wine in grocery stores given the unexpected departure of the previous Executive Director just three months before the new law takes effect.

On May 24th, the Commissioners of the ABC appointed Clayton Byrd to serve as its Executive Director. "The staff at the ABC is working tirelessly to process applications, communicate with applicants, conduct site inspections, and verify statutory compliance with documentation." Byrd said. "I'm committed to the success of this rollout and I'm proud of our team. This commission will continue to work diligently with the industry and in a business friendly manner to ensure continued success."

For questions, please contact Brandy Crissman, Administrative Secretary, Brandy.Crissman@tn.gov