



Ventura County  
Behavioral Health  
ALCOHOL & DRUG PROGRAMS  
PREVENTION SERVICES

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# Establishing Quality Evaluation Methods in New Terrain: Lessons Learned From a Social Host Ordinance Impact Evaluation



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# Today's Agenda

- Background
- Evaluation History & Purpose
- Study Design
- Target Jurisdictions
- Evaluation Strategies & Tools
- Key Findings & Impacts
- Limitations & Lessons Learned
- Next Steps



# Background

## How did the SHO's come about?

- VCBH was awarded SIG funds to support policy development related to underage and binge drinking in 2004
- Within 3 years VCBH and their partners had passed and implemented:
  - SHO's in all 10 municipalities
  - Countywide SHO that covers all unincorporated areas
  - Formal resolution to the countywide SHO to include federal land
- Ventura County was one of the first counties in the nation to have seamless coverage





# Evaluation History & Purpose

## Why conduct an impact evaluation?

- Two previous evaluations were conducted on:
  - Policy advancement and implementation
  - Enforcement and initial outcomes
- By 2009 there was a growing interest in the longer term impacts
- Impact evaluation was designed to look at outcomes related to decreases in the incidence of disturbances and other problems resulting from underage drinking parties at private residences





# Study Design

## What did the impact evaluation consist of?

- Two Components
  - Phase I: evidence about the impacts of SHOs in three jurisdictions
  - Phase II: additional indicators and evidence from other stakeholder groups (youth, parents)







## Target Jurisdictions (cont.)

|                        | Camarillo | Thousand Oaks | Ventura |
|------------------------|-----------|---------------|---------|
| Level of initial fine  | \$500     | \$2,500       | \$1,000 |
| Geographic location    | Central   | East          | West    |
| History of enforcement | ✓         | ✓             | ✓       |



# Evaluation Strategies & Tools

## What methods were used for planning and data collection?

- Logic Model
  - Graphic representation of relationships between SHO goals and expected outcomes
- Document Reviews
  - Comparison of ordinances
- Enforcement Data
  - Number of SHO violations
  - Age and gender of hosts
  - Size of parties







## Evaluation Strategies & Tools (cont.)

- ▶ Impact Data Indicators
  - Law enforcement party disturbance calls
  - CHKS data on alcohol use, drinking and driving and perceived difficulty obtaining alcohol
  - VCMC alcohol-related ER visits
  - CHP-SWITRS data on collisions, injuries and deaths involving underage persons driving under the influence
  
- ▶ Patrol Survey
  - Administered to 91 law enforcement officers with authority to issue SHO citations in the three target cities
  
- ▶ Key Informant Interviews
  - Conducted with city officials regarding the SHO fine and appeal process in each jurisdiction



# Key Findings & Impacts



## Comparison of Ordinances

| Similarities                                  | Differences  |
|---|--|
| Purpose of ordinances                         | Date ordinances were passed                          |
| Definition of responsible person              | Amount of initial fines                              |
| Written notices given to responsible parties  | Definition of unruly gathering/ public nuisance      |
| Response costs assessed for repeat violations | Availability of Community Service for underage hosts |

# Enforcement Data

## Violations Issued Since Passage

- ▶ Over half of the 242 SHO citations issued countywide were in the three targeted cities\*

|               | 2006<br>(Aug-Dec) | 2007<br>(Jan-Dec) | 2008 (Jan-<br>Dec) | 2009<br>(Jan-May) | Total |
|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-------|
| Camarillo     | 10                | 17                | 15                 | 7                 | 49    |
| Thousand Oaks | 2                 | 18                | 13                 | 7                 | 40    |
| Ventura       | --                | 11                | 18                 | 11                | 40    |
| Total         | 12                | 46                | 46                 | 25                | 129   |

\*Since the evaluation took place additional SHO violation citations have been issued (i.e., over 350 to date).

## Enforcement Data (cont.)

### Characteristics of SHO Violators

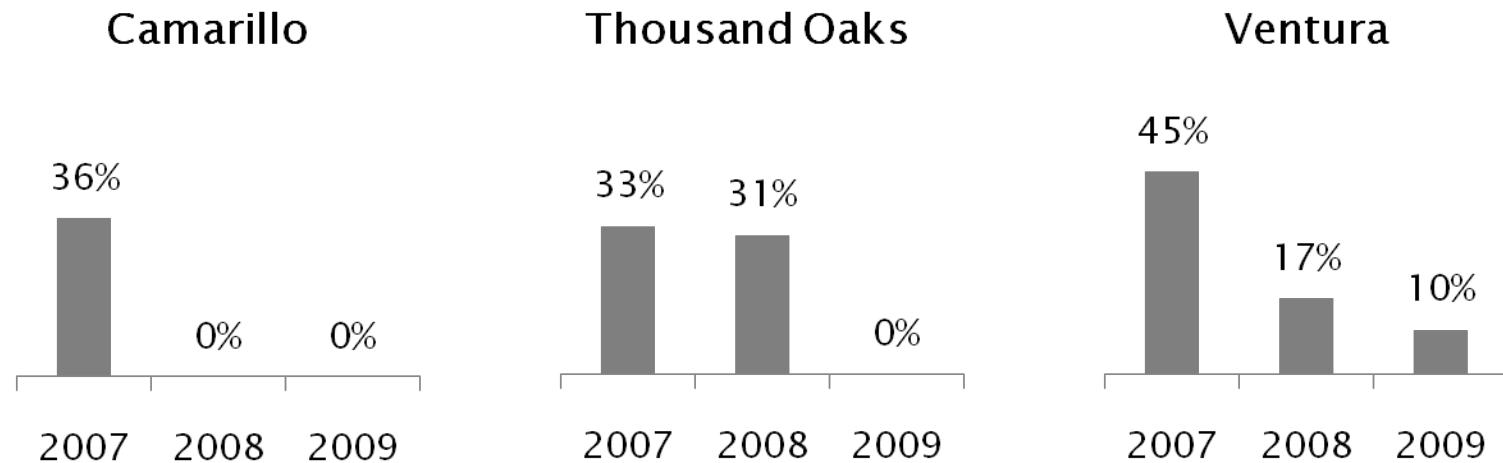
- ▶ At least half of hosts were under 21 across all years and cities
- ▶ Percent of male hosts decreased over time

|                   | City          | 2006<br>(Aug-Dec) | 2007<br>(Jan-Dec) | 2008 (Jan-<br>Dec) | 2009<br>(Jan-May) |
|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| Underage<br>Hosts | Camarillo     | 50%               | 73%               | 70%                | 71%               |
|                   | Thousand Oaks | 50%               | 50%               | 69%                | 71%               |
|                   | Ventura       | --                | 55%               | 53%                | 64%               |
| Male Hosts        | Camarillo     | 63%               | 64%               | 40%                | 43%               |
|                   | Thousand Oaks | 100%              | 72%               | 67%                | 57%               |
|                   | Ventura       | --                | 100%              | 59%                | 64%               |

## Enforcement Data (cont.)

### Size of Party

- ▶ Percent of hosts who received citations for large parties with > 50 attendees decreased since 2007\*



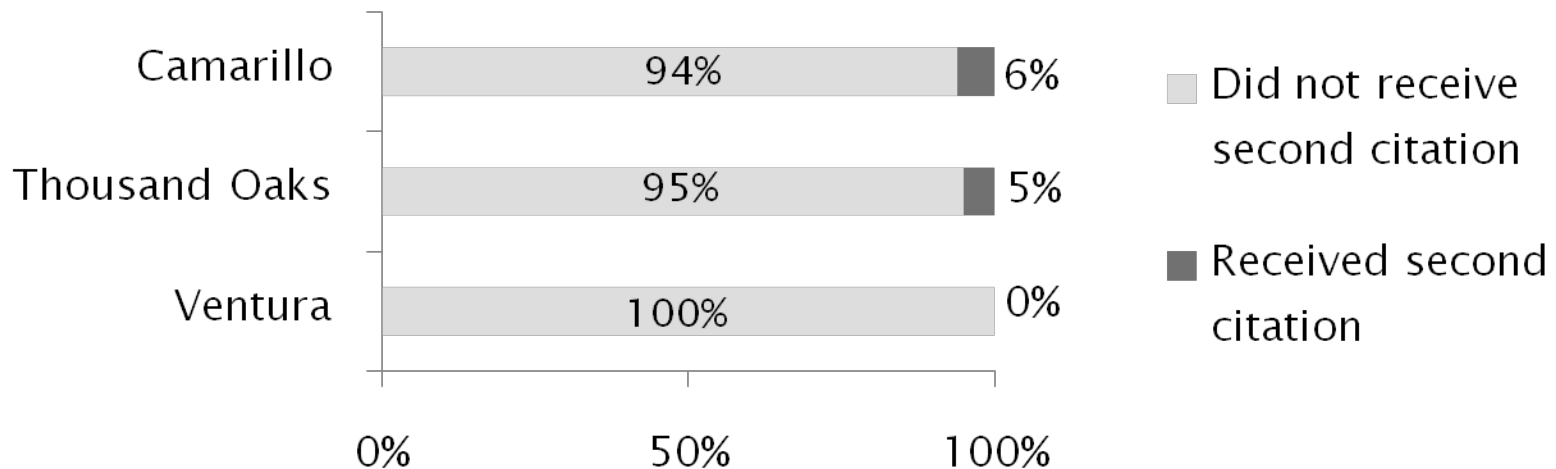
\*2009 is a partial year through May



## Enforcement Data (cont.)

### Repeat Offenders

- ▶ Only 5-6% of violators were repeat offenders

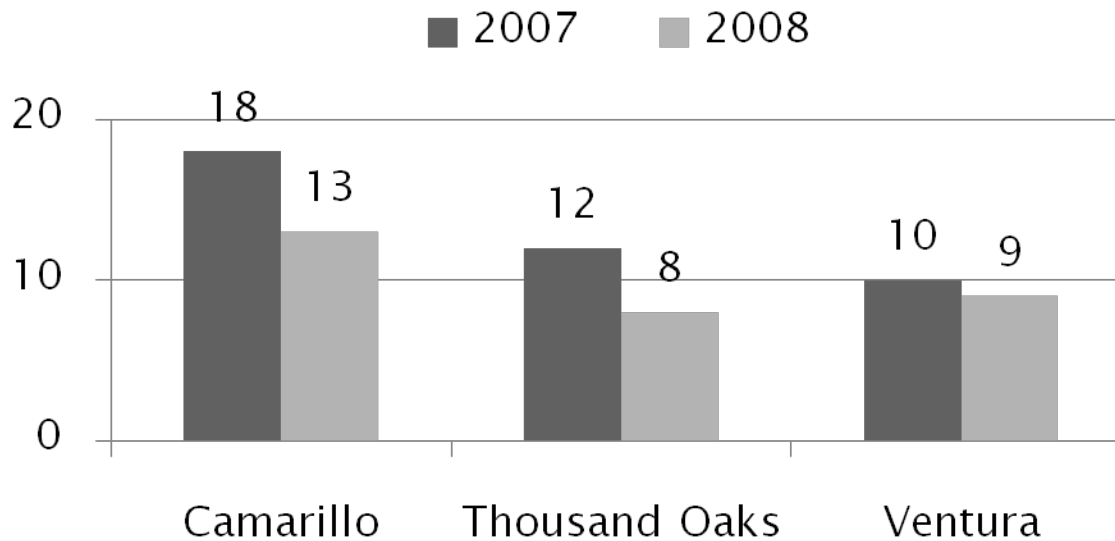




# Data Indicators

## Party Disturbance Calls for Service

- ▶ Rate of SHO violations per 500 party disturbance calls decreased from 2007 to 2008 for each city

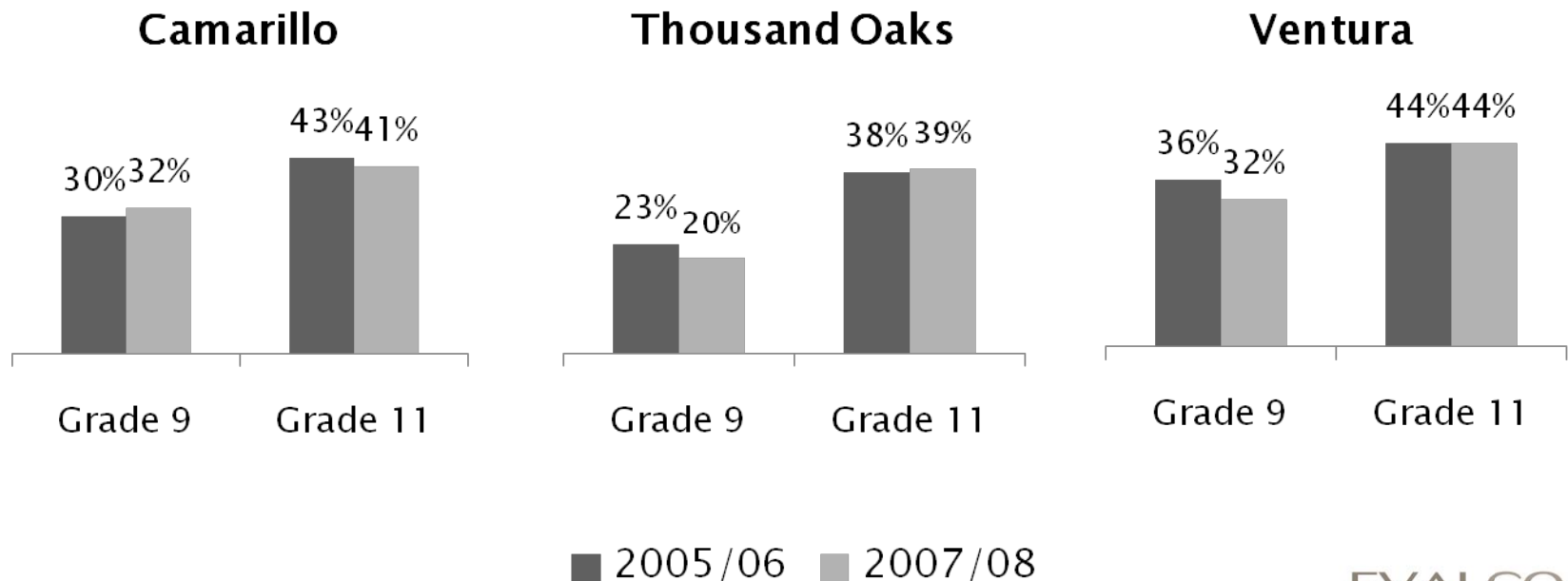




## Data Indicators (cont.)

### CHKS Alcohol Use

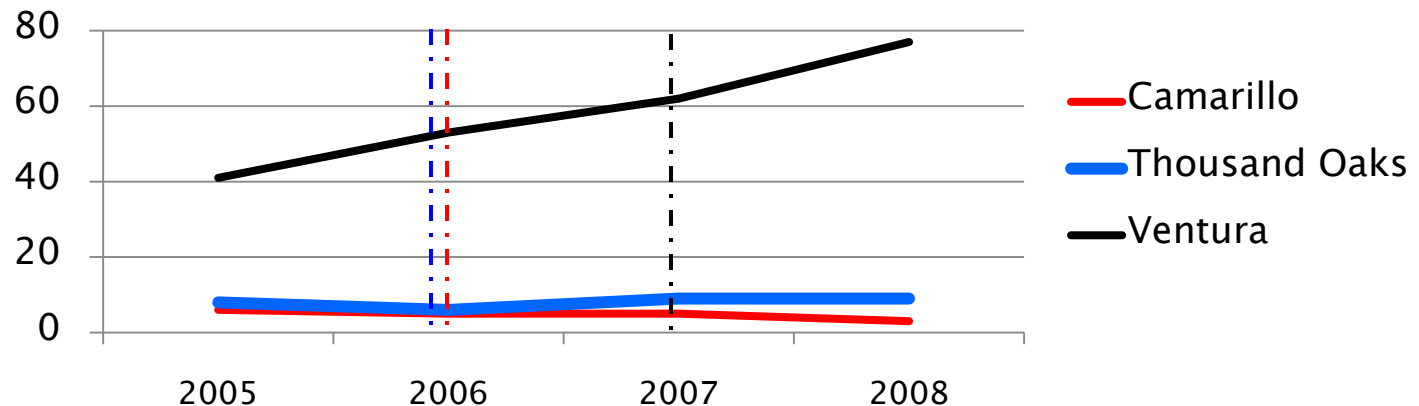
- ▶ Few differences in reported use of alcohol in the last 30 days between 2005/06 and 2007/08



## Data Indicators (cont.)

### Alcohol-related ER Visits

- ▶ Number of alcohol-related ER visits increased slightly over time for Ventura youth (12-20); Camarillo and Thousand Oaks trends remained fairly stable



\*Vertical lines represent when each SHO was passed



## Data Indicators (cont.)

### CHP-SWITRS Collision Data

- ▶ Number of alcohol-related collisions by drivers age 16-20 seemed to be on the decline for Thousand Oaks in 2008

|               | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008* |
|---------------|------|------|------|------|-------|
| Camarillo     | 5    | 6    | 10   | 9    | 10    |
| Thousand Oaks | 24   | 19   | 19   | 30   | 10    |
| Ventura       | 14   | 15   | 22   | 16   | 21    |

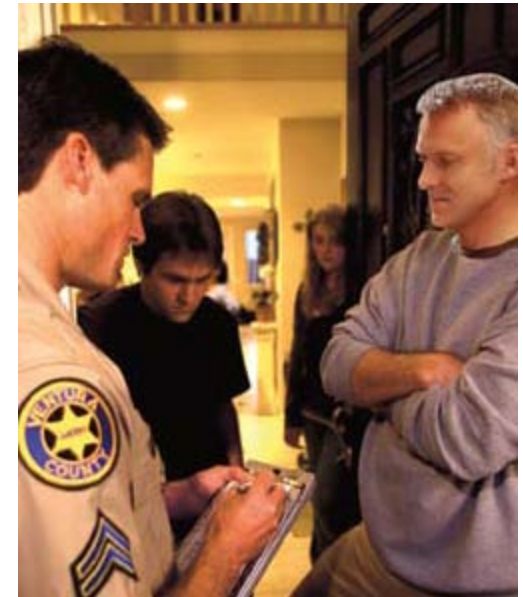
\*2008 is a partial year through October



# Patrol Survey

## Similar Findings Across the Cities

- ▶ 3 out of 4 officers agreed that the SHO is an effective tool for reducing underage drinking parties
- ▶ Over one quarter (27%) of officers reported fewer calls for service for underage drinking parties since the ordinances passed
- ▶ 40 to 45% of patrol officers reported interest in learning more about SHOs





## Patrol Survey (cont.)

### Similar Findings Across the Cities

- ▶ Over 90% of officers reported that there have been no negative impacts resulting from the SHOs in their respective jurisdictions
- ▶ 80% of officers believed the SHO penalty/fine is appropriate for their jurisdiction
- ▶ 3 out of 4 officers reported no problems/obstacles when trying to enforce the SHO



## Patrol Survey (cont.)

### Why is the SHO an effective tool?\*

1. Large fines force people to think about the consequences of hosting underage parties
2. Holds parents and others accountable for hosting underage parties
3. Reduces the frequency and/or size of underage parties
4. Provides officers another tool to help control underage drinking
5. Allows officers to impose an immediate consequence
6. Allows enforcement to take place without having to file a criminal complaint

\* Most common responses/themes



## Patrol Survey (cont.)

### What would make it easier to enforce the SHO?\*

- ▶ Creating greater public awareness about the ordinance and its consequences
- ▶ Reducing the number of minors that officers must prove are present at the parties
- ▶ Having additional tools to collect fines and recover response costs

\* Most common responses/themes



# Key Informant Interviews

## Collection of Fines and Appeals

- ▶ Interviewees from all three cities mentioned challenges collecting Social Host fines due to the high costs and few consequences for not paying

|                      | Camarillo | Thousand Oaks | Ventura |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------|---------|
| % of Fines Collected | 69%       | 47%           | 30%     |
| # of Appeals         | 0         | 13            | 7       |
| # of Appeals Upheld  | NA        | 1             | 1       |





# Limitations, Lessons Learned & Next Steps



# Limitations

## This study was not perfect!

- ▶ Archival data were not always available for every time period of interest (CHKS pre-data)
- ▶ Constraints existed in the archival data used in the study (party disturbance calls)
- ▶ No comparison group/jurisdiction
- ▶ SHO is ultimately intended to change community norms about underage drinking – often takes many years (seat belt use, MADD)



## Evaluation Lessons Learned

- ✓ Be flexible – time intervals covered by a given statistic or dataset may not be ideal
- ✓ Collaborate with local agencies to obtain the most reliable and relevant data possible
- ✓ Be patient and willing to make many calls
- ✓ Determine if permission to review records is required early on
- ✓ Allow plenty of time to gather and clean archival data
- ✓ Create tools to supplement/complement archival data



## Next Steps

1. Continue building awareness about the existence of and consequences associated with SHOs
2. Consider changes suggested by patrol officers regarding SHO enforcement procedures
3. Consider additional training or materials for law enforcement
4. Investigate methods to increase the collection of SHO fines
5. Conduct Phase II of the impact evaluation and continue monitoring the impacts of SHOs over time



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