



News Release

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New home rule resolution allows sale of alcohol at additional parks and recreation venues with prior approval

TOPEKA, KAN. – A home rule resolution passed by the Board of County Commissioners allows the sale of alcoholic beverages at additional Shawnee County Parks + Recreation properties with prior approval of the department director and the Board of County Commissioners. The move places such venues as major baseball and softball complexes on the same level as the Kansas Expocentre and Lake Shawnee and Cypress Ridge Golf Courses.

The impetus for the change in county code is that large tournaments seeking locations prefer locations that offer the sale of alcohol, such as beer, at game sites. Such tournaments generate substantial economic impact beyond the sale of alcohol. For example, tournaments arranged for SCP+R by Midwest Sports Productions in 2018 generated economic activity/impact of \$5 million spent locally by guests on hotels, restaurants, gasoline, entertainment and other expenses.

“This change brings us in line with many other parks departments competing for the same tournaments,” said John Knight, SCP+R director. “We’ll be able to better compete to bring in tournaments that generate additional dollars for the local economy at the same time that sales of beer, for example, generate additional revenue.”

Under the home rule resolution vendors, on a case by case basis, may negotiate with the SCP+R director contracts to sell alcoholic beverages at SCP+R venues. The Board of Commissioners has final approval of such contracts. The additional revenue from alcoholic beverage sales, explained Knight, helps relieve taxpayers of some of the burden of covering operational costs for parks and recreation facilities.

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Possession of alcohol, but not the sale, has already been allowed in SCP+R rental facilities such as shelters. Knight emphasizes that thousands of adult athletes play in leagues and tournaments at SCP+R softball and baseball complexes and there have been very few alcohol related incidents with players.

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Shawnee County Parks + Recreation includes nearly 60 miles of trails, 2,625 acres of parks and 320 annual days of sporting activities. In addition, the department offers recreation programs, educational programs and golf. A combination of tax dollars, user fees and private donations enables Shawnee County Parks and Recreation to offer parks, sporting and aquatic facilities with state-of-the-art features, and beautiful, nationally recognized gardens.

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