

BASSET program teaches local businesses how to sniff out fake IDs

by Cory Davenport, Contributing Writer
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EDWARDSVILLE - The **Edwardsville Police Department** is working to ensure local establishments are compliant with the **Beverage Alcohol Sellers and Servers Education Training (BASSET)** program, and as of now, the training is free.

Edwardsville Police Officer Jason Hunter currently instructs these classes, which are dedicated to teaching business owners and employees of alcohol-selling establishments how to properly check IDs and serve customers within the parameters of the law. Classes are held at 118 Hillsboro Ave, with the next round of BASSET certification

classes coming from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. March 24. According to state law, all on-premises alcohol servers and ID checkers must be BASSET certified.

Hunter said his certification classes, which are free thanks to the **Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention (ASAP)** - a group funded by **Chestnut Health Systems**. Usually, these classes can cost as much as \$25 for online certification, and as much as \$50 for in-person classes like Hunter's. Hunter was sent to Chicago by ASAP to train to be a BASSET certification instructor. While they are free and open to the public, Hunter said establishments within the borders of **Edwardsville School District #7** would get first priority in classes, meaning people from Alton and Wood River are allowed to apply for the classes, but may be excluded from classes if they fill with people from within that district.

Cost (or lack of it) is not the only incentive for taking his classes, Hunter said.

"There is an advantage in taking Edwardsville's in-person training," he added. "Because I am in law enforcement, I have collected several hundred fake IDs to show local managers or alcohol sellers what people are doing to get served. A lot of these fake IDs are pretty good. They look real. You won't be able to unsee the mistakes on the fake IDs after taking these local classes."

These "top-of-the-line" fake IDs are being purchased from websites based in places such as Eastern Europe and China, Hunter said. For as little as \$50-\$100, minors can purchase one of these IDs, which Hunter said are pretty decent copies. He said there are always obvious and glaring flaws, and he helps people notice those during his BASSET certification classes.

"I think college kids really take advantage of that," he said. "Many of them say it's pretty easy and many friends have them."

Minors attempting to use someone else's ID who resembles them are also covered in the classes. Hunter said he gives people tips on ensuring the person on the ID is actually the person presenting it. He said that portion of the class is also opened to tobacco sellers as well.

According to the state law, which came into effect in July 2016, all on-premises alcohol servers and ID checkers must attain BASSET certification within 120 days of hiring. The City of Edwardsville is considering implementing an additional ordinance for the requirement of BASSET certification as well.

To get certified, people must attend a four-hour class and then pass a test. After passing said test, the student will be mailed a paper license within two weeks and have his or her

name added to an online state database. The BASSET license expires after three years, and the holder must take another class at that time to become re-certified. The BASSET license stays with the employee, and not the business itself.

Hunter and another officer were trained in BASSET certification since 2014. ASAP and Chestnut Health Systems, which is dependent on a federal block grant, pays the \$300 a year fee to the State of Illinois required to have a trainer's license. ASAP also pays the officers' hourly pay rate and any overtime accrued during draining, as well as materials.

More information on BASSET training in Edwardsville can be found at <https://sites.google.com/view/edwardsvillebasset/home>, which is also where people may register for the classes. While free, Hunter said registration is required due to class size restrictions.