

# Grant will put police in bars to curb underage drinking

By SCOTT MERZBACH  
Staff Writer

AMHERST — Let bar buyers beware — if they're under age. A new police enforcement operation this spring will feature uniformed officers stationed in Amherst bars to ensure that underage drinkers aren't slipping into these establishments.

Capt. Scott Livingstone said Tuesday that the department is using a portion of \$10,000 it recently received from the state's

Underage Alcohol Enforcement Grant Program to pay for these details. "This is the first time we're doing a badges-in-bars where we assist the owners," Livingstone said.

The aim, he said, is to deter students under 21 from trying to get into bars unless they have valid licenses. During these operations, officers will visit every bar in town on different days and at different hours.

Police officers will assist bouncers and doormen in validating that the licenses being provided for proof of age are authentic.

At other times, officers will be stationed inside the bar, milling around near customers or watching back doors for anyone who tries to enter there.

Livingstone said police will arrest people with fake IDs and for being minors in possession of alcohol. He said these efforts are supported by bar owners, who often get sanctions placed on their

businesses for allowing minors into their bars.

The grant from the Executive Office of Public Safety and Security will also help pay for additional patrols on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights this spring, generally the busiest nights in terms of police activity, with some of the focus being on keeping students with open containers of alcohol off the public ways.

In fiscal 2008, 368 people were either arrested or summoned to

court by Amherst police to face charges of being minors in possession of alcohol.

Livingstone said other alcohol enforcement operations will continue, including the Cops in Shops, in which plainclothes police officers work alongside employees in package stores to prevent minors from purchasing alcohol, and party patrols, in which officers attempt to locate illegal bars set up off the university and college campuses.

The grant will be particularly helpful in a challenging budget year, he said.

In looking for economical ways to deal with alcohol enforcement, starting this weekend Amherst police will have some joint patrols with UMass police, including a cooperative venture between motorcycle officers.

Later in the spring, state police are expected to be in Amherst during the traditional Hobart Hoedown weekends.

## Goshen residents discuss ice damage

By BEN STORROW  
Gazette Contributing Writer

GOSHEN — Goshen residents continued to pick through the damage left by the December ice storm Thursday night, as they heard from a panel of experts on how to deal with the destruction of trees on their property.

"Ice and wind are a natural, healthy part of our forest," Paul Catanazaro, a forest resource specialist at the University of Massachusetts, explained to the crowd at Town Hall. "I get a lot of a calls and emails saying: 'My woods are ruined.'"

But he said: "Realize, that ecologically speaking this is an OK thing."

Catanazaro noted that the storm, in breaking and knocking down trees, was actually creating habitat that resembled the old growth forests native to New England. Downed trees allow for more light to reach the forest floor, he said, while fallen logs provided good habitat for wildlife.

The majority of Catanazaro's presentation focused on how homeowners could assess and deal with the damage to trees on their property. He said a tree's crown, or canopy, was one of the best methods of determining its health.

"If 0 to 50 percent of the crown was lost," Catanazaro explained, "then the tree is likely OK. Fifty to 75 percent loss is a significant shock to a tree and its recovery is on the line." He said that if a tree had lost more than 75 percent of its crown, it most likely would not recover.

While Catanazaro said leaving the fallen trees was a good option — especially for those concerned about wildlife habitat — he noted that salvaging timber was an alternative, depending on the number and quality of the trees fallen on one particular property.

Generally speaking, he said, someone with less than 10 acres should seek a certified arborist while homeowners who had between 10 and 30 acres should find timber harvesters to salvage any fallen logs. Those with larger parcels of land greater than 30 acres should seek out a certified forester, Catanazaro advised.

Catanazaro also pointed residents to a Web site he maintains, www.masswoods.net, which offers contact information for state and private foresters, as well as local land trusts and other organizations that can help residents deal with tree damage in their area.

Residents also heard from Chesterfield arborist Jim McSweeney, who offered advice on what options homeowners have for saving or pruning trees near their homes. McSweeney noted that he used three categories for determining the chance of a restoring a damaged tree: crown loss, and trunk and root damage.

Goshen town officials also spoke to the crowd updating them on the continuing cleanup efforts. Bob Goss, town tree warden, said that he and a representative from the Federal Emergency Management Agency had counted 600 trees that need to be pruned along roadsides. Goss said the town's tree warden budget was \$2,000, but hoped that some federal assistance might be available for tree removal. Larry Holmberg, Goshen emergency management director, said the town had submitted a preliminary request of about \$56,000 to the federal government for the damages incurred during the emergency event. He said a second application, concerning the cleanup of remaining debris, was forthcoming and estimated the tab to be somewhere near \$100,000.

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