

ARLINGTON MARKET FIRST TO POP CORK ON SUNDAY LIQUOR SALES

Ohio liquor division bows to voters, ends Prohibition tradition

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By Nate Ellis

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With the 10 a.m. purchase of a three-quarter-liter bottle of vodka, **Huffman's Market** made state history yesterday, becoming the first store in Ohio to have carryout liquor sales on Sunday.

The Upper Arlington grocery, 2140 Tremont Center, obtained the right to sell liquor on Sundays after its liquor contract was amended Thursday by the Ohio Division of Liquor Control. On March 2, voters approved both daylong liquor sales and extended hours for Sunday wine sales.

The store now may sell beer, wine and liquor from 10 a.m. to midnight on Sundays.

Yesterday, customers lined up to take advantage. An Upper Arlington man who asked that his name not be used made the first purchase, seconds after owner Tim Huffman announced, "OK, it's time."

"I wanted to be the first," the man said. "I think it's great for free enterprise."

Second in line was Brian Perera of Upper Arlington, who grabbed a copy of The New York Times and a bottle of scotch. The liquor was a gift for a friend, he said, and the Sunday sale allowed him to avoid making a special trip to the store the previous day.

"It's convenient, just 71 short years after Prohibition," Perera said.

Huffman, who sported a tie featuring bottles of various liquors, said he was pleased he no longer had to worry about a restriction he called outdated.

"I'm very excited," he said. "The voters won out. It makes me feel great that I got it done, and it's nice to know we're the first in the state."

According to the Franklin County Board of Elections, 241 of 284 voters -- 85 percent -- supported the liquor option.

Huffman's "is the first and so far the only contract agency that can sell spirituous liquor on Sunday in Ohio," said Matt Mullins, a spokesman for the Ohio Division of Liquor Control.

"Because this was a site-specific vote, we said we would abide by the voters' wishes. This is the first time since the repeal of Prohibition that liquor will be able to be sold on Sundays."

Many of Huffman's patrons yesterday congratulated him on the feat. Even those who did not buy alcohol showed support for the change and for the store, which Huffman has operated since 1986 in the Tremont Shopping Center.

About 10:45 a.m., Upper Arlington residents Art and Betty Eberle stepped up to a cashier, each holding a bottle of wine. They said they had just left church and were happy that they no longer had to wait until 1 p.m. to buy wine.

"We would leave church on Sundays and sometimes we were too early to buy," Mrs. Eberle said.

The amendment to Huffman's contract is not only convenient, it represents democracy in action, Mr. Eberle said.

"It's kind of neat that he's able to do that, and I like the idea of the local option," he said.

"The fact that people who live in the area were able to vote and make this decision, I think, is good."

nellis@thisweeknews.com