

Colorado Liquor Licensing Tidbits

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Like many states, Colorado has a dual licensing system. The local licensing authority takes in the initial application. Local means Colorado's 64 counties and hundreds of municipalities. They determine the good moral character of the applicant and the reasonable needs and desires of the inhabitants of the neighborhood.

After review the local authority schedules a hearing. Along with meticulously assembling the application, the key to success is petitioning and preparing witnesses for that hearing. Organic or ginned up by competitor, that's where ambush opposition appears. When the hearing's successful, the local authority forwards the application to the state. Following state approval, the local authority issues the license.

Tidbits:

- The framework for U.S. liquor license law dates back to the 1930's end of prohibition, but the legislature tinkers with the law almost every year and every state is different.
- In Colorado, most licenses are either on premises or off premises consumption only. Brewpubs are the hybrid.
- Liquor store licenses are one to a customer. 3.2 beer and on premises consumption licenses don't suffer that restriction.
- Restaurants (H&R licenses) must have real kitchens and serve meals – not so for taverns. Neighborhoods fight taverns a lot harder than they fight restaurants.
- Most licensees must be 500 feet from schools; in Denver, liquor stores need to be 1,000 feet apart.