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Study: Benton County Could Make 33 Million in Liquor Sales

By: [KNWA, Fayetteville, AR](#)
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Some Benton County, Arkansas folks are not afraid to drive a few miles to buy certain beverages.

"It's no secret that we probably have more drinkers in Benton county than in a lot of counties across northwest Arkansas and everybody continually goes to Missouri because it's not available to them at home," says Tim Wise, who lives in the county.

The group that's trying to get the liquor sales option on the ballot, asked the Economics Department at the University of Arkansas to see what effect that change would have.

"If you look at the incomes and you look at the spending patterns on other items, its looks like about 77 million dollars of sales of alcohol are happening elsewhere, but being consumed in Benton County," says Kathy Deck, the Director of the Economics program at the University of Arkansas.

But the study indicates the amount of money that would actually stay in the county is about \$33 million.

"That's pretty substantial for a county the size of Benton County," says Deck.

Deck, who headed up the study, says that averages out to about a two percent increase of Benton County's sales tax revenue.

Some think that money is needed.

"The schools need that money, it could help out a lot," says Dean Senty, who lives in Bella Vista.

But others think it could put Benton county kids in harms way.

"From the community standpoint as a teacher, I see a lot of

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lives in Benton County.

For Roger Gildenhaus, the owner of Macadoodles, a liquor store just across the state line, he's staying out of the conversation

"It's up to the community, certainly not up to us, and we're ready to move if it does happen," says Gildenhaus.

But he knows a change will effect his business

"We've got a location in Bentonville on Walton Blvd on Rainbow curve and we've got most of our engineering work done on it which we did about 5 years ago," says Gildenhaus.

So he's ready no matter what the outcome.

This decision is still a long way off. The group must first get 40,000 signatures, then it will be voted on by folks in Benton County on the November ballot.

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