

Sheriff's office tobacco sting clears five of six businesses

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On Feb. 27, the Del Norte County Sheriff's Office released the results of several tobacco stings throughout the county.

"As we have received multiple complaints of minors being sold or in possession of tobacco, and in collaboration with grant funding, we are frequently checking into the practices of our local businesses," the sheriff's office wrote on their Facebook page.

"There is no regularity to the stings," Cmdr. Bill Steven, DNCSO Public Information Officer, told The Triplicate. "We try to be sneaky about that, so no routine is detected."

The sheriff's office most recent stings included six local tobacco retailers. Steven said the sheriff's office used a "younger-looking" employee of the jail who is actually under the age of 21 to try to make a purchase at the establishments.

"We're not using a fake person with a fake ID. It's a real person with a real ID," Steven said. "A lot of cases, the clerk sees the ID. But a lot of times, they only go through the motions, they don't really absorb the

information or do the math.”

Five of the six retailers visited were in compliance with laws governing tobacco sales to underage customers.

Those retailers were:

— Patriot, 1500 Northcrest Dr.

— Shell, 1200 Northcrest Dr.

— Patriot, 1089 U.S. Highway 101

— Y Liquors, 890 U.S. Highway 101

— Fort Dick Market, 6670 Lake Earl Dr.

One business did sell to the sheriff’s office decoy and that store’s clerk was issued a citation. Steven said the violation is Penal Code 308, selling or furnishing tobacco or smoking paraphernalia to a person under age 21. He added only the store’s clerk was issued the citation, not the store. The sheriff’s office is not releasing the name of the store at this time.

Steven said that tobacco laws need to be taken seriously.

“We’ve taken an aggressive stance toward minors and tobacco. We’re watching the fair, school events, public functions and in collaboration with the police department,” he said.

The DNCISO asks your help by reporting any suspicious activity by contacting dispatch at 707-464-4191 and pressing 0 to speak with a dispatcher.