



Most local youth don't drink is billboard message

Recently, a new Most of Us billboard made its appearance on Highway 371 south of Pine River.

LeeAnn Sampson, Pine River-Backus Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Prevention (ATOD) Coordinator, commented that "creating this billboard was an extensive process where we gathered input from 7-12th grade students at the Pine River-Backus High School and from community members of various ages."

After four months of testing various images and messages, a consensus was finally reached across the age groups. Before any media piece is displayed, the financiers of the campaign must also give their approval. Most of Us is sponsored by the PR-B ATOD Program with funding from the Minnesota Department of Human Services, Alcohol and Drug Abuse Division.

The message on the billboard was taken from the February 2010 Most of Us survey which surveyed 339 Pine River Backus 7th-12th grade students. The Most of Us Campaign is a positive community norms project that challenges people's commonly held perceptions about their environment and the behavior of their peers, as well as their beliefs about how problems like underage drinking should be confronted.

Often times, community members have asked if the youth in the billboards are local youth. "We have decided not to use local youth in upcoming media pieces. Our hope is that the youth who have committed to staying ATOD free will keep that commitment, but in case they make a mistake to use ATOD, having their picture up on a billboard would send a mixed message to their peers and the entire community," stated Sampson.

In the near future, another new billboard will be displayed on the other side. Testing is underway. For more information about the Most of Us campaign or the PR-B ATOD prevention program please contact LeeAnn at 587-4292 or visit the website at www.workingtogethercoalition.org.

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