# Wet/Dry Issues
## Fact Sheet

ECONOMIC ISSUES:

- For every $1.00 in revenue from the sale of alcoholic beverages, the people of Alabama spend $15.00 in social costs. *[For the formula that supports this claim, go to www.alcap.com and click on the "Wet/Dry Issues" page, scroll down and click on the link, "Alcohol Costs Compared to Revenue from Sales."]*

- The following estimates reflect nation-wide costs for UNDERAGED drinking only:

### Economic Costs of Underage Drinking

The costs to the United States of underage drinking is substantial. The National Academy of Sciences (NAS), Institute of Medicine released a landmark report to Congress in September 2003, "Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility", found that underage alcohol use costs the nation an estimated $53 billion annually, including:

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| Violent Crime: | $29,368,000,000 |
| Traffic Crashes: | $19,452,000,000 |
| Burns: | $189,000,000 |
| Drowning: | $426,000,000 |
| Suicide Attempts: | $1,512,000,000 |
| Fetal Alcohol Syndrome: | $493,000,000 |
| Alcohol Poisonings: | $340,000,000 |
| Treatment: | $1,008,000,000 |
| TOTAL: | **$52,788,000,000** |

Source: http://www.marininstitute.org/Youth/costs_underage_drinking.htm

TRAFFIC SAFETY ISSUES:

- In 2008, there were 11,773 fatalities in crashes involving a driver with a Blood Alcohol Content (BAC) of .08 or higher—32% of the total traffic fatalities for the year. (NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis, 1200 New Jersey Avenue SE, Washington, DC 20590)

- In 2008, 16% of child (age 14 and younger) traffic fatalities occurred in alcohol-impaired-driving crashes. (Ibid.)

- The percentage of drivers with BAC of .08 or above in fatal crashes was highest for motorcycle riders. (Ibid.)

- Drivers with a BAC level of .08 or higher in fatal crashes were eight times more likely to have a prior conviction for driving while impaired than were drivers with no alcohol. (Ibid.)

- In 2008, 7,378 (57%) of the drivers involved in fatal crashes who had been drinking had a BAC of .15 or greater. (Ibid.)

## HEALTH ISSUES:

- Alcohol effects the brain and central nervous system
  - Damages and eventually destroys brain cells
  - Impairs memory
  - Dulls senses
  - Impairs physical coordination
  - Affects judgment, reasoning and inhibitions

- Immune system
  - Lowers resistance to disease

- Liver
  - Damages and eventually destroys liver cells
  - Medical conditions include fatty liver, hepatitis and cirrhosis

- Digestive tract
  - Causes bleeding and inflammation
  - May trigger/cause cancer

- Heart
  - May raise blood pressure
  - Causes irregular heart beat
  - Conditions include cardio-myopathy, ischemic heart disease and cerebrovascular disorders (strokes)

- Reproductive system
  - In women, menstrual cycles become irregular; pregnant women have an increased risk of bearing children with birth defects
  - In men, hormone levels may be altered; impotence may occur

## OTHER ISSUES:

- Alcohol can devastate work associates, families, friendships, neighbors and others with whom the drinker has a relationship. Alcoholism is a factor in 25% of all hospital admissions.

- The percent of suicide victims with a history of alcohol abuse or who were drinking just prior to their suicide ranges from 20% to 36%. Alcohol is linked to two-thirds of all suicide attempts. Alcohol is implicated in half of all teen suicides.

- High doses of alcohol significantly increase aggression. Abused wives report that their husbands are either alcohol-dependent or have some kind of disability related to alcohol. In two-thirds of all homicides, the victim, the assailant or both were drinking.

- Alcohol is related to child abuse. There is a definite connection between women who physically abuse children and alcohol abuse.

- In the United States, an estimated 7 million children under the age of 8 grow up in an environment filled with anxiety, confusion, tension and denial resulting from an alcoholic parent. Children raised by an alcoholic parent often have sleep difficulties, suffer from depression, loneliness and stomach problems. These children are more likely to be delinquent and commit suicide.