Businesses expect boost from Sunday alcohol sales

BY NORMAN CANNADA
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Stuart Pohl didn't waste any time when he learned Thursday the City of Seneca had received its final approval from the state for Sunday alcohol sales.

Pohl, owner of The Spot on the Alley located in Ram Cat Alley, drove to Greenville on Thursday after seeing Seneca on the list of cities whose paperwork had been processed by the S.C. Department of Revenue on its website, sctax.org. He took his application and the $3,050 yearly fee and received his one-year license to sell liquor on Sundays. He said The Spot will open this Sunday for the first time since the business was a private club many years ago.

"It was either mail it and get it back in a week or drive to Greenville and be able to open Sunday," said Pohl. He said he has been watching the sctax.org website regularly so he would know when he could purchase his license.

Any restaurant with a permit to sell beer and wine can sell beer and wine this Sunday, according to Joel Seavey, treasurer/finance officer for the city of Seneca. He said those who want to sell liquor on Sundays will be required to submit a separate application and pay the required fee. Establishments within the city limits can pay a fee for the entire year or get a license for specific Sundays at a fee of $200 per Sunday. A store that wants to sell any alcohol on Sundays that will be taken off the premises must also submit an application and pay a fee.

Pohl led the effort to get the Seneca City Council to put a referendum on Sunday alcohol sales on the Nov. 6 ballot, which passed with more than 60 percent of the vote. The city passed first reading on an ordinance that conformed city law to the results of the referendum Nov. 13. The measure received final approval at a called council meeting Nov. 27.

When asked if the work he put into getting Sunday alcohol sales approved in Seneca was worth it, Pohl said, "Ask me in about six weeks." He added that he believes it will increase business. Last month he said he expected to see a 15 percent increase in sales and that his employees were looking forward to picking up additional hours of work.

The ordinance allows establishments with appropriate ABC permits to serve alcoholic beverages on Sundays, as well as permitting retail stores to sell beer and wine.

Seavey said the city will receive direct benefits from alcohol sales through the 2 percent Hospitality and Accommodations Tax, as well as increases in business license fees, which would come from expected increases in overall sales of businesses selling alcohol on Sundays.

ncannada@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6684