

Kotzebue bans sale of alcohol

Voters in Kotzebue decided to ban the sale of alcohol in the community by a close vote of 427 to 403.

Also voting on an alcohol issue was the village of Shungnak, where voters decided on a 46 to 44 vote to ban the sale of alcohol. The Shungnak issue was more stringent than that decided in Kotzebue, however, because Shungnak voters also decided in favor of banning the importation of alcohol to the Northwestern Alaska village.

The Kotzebue vote, which includes

questioned and absentee ballots, drew a large percentage of the 1,342 registered voters in the community.

This is the third time in three years that Kotzebue voters have been faced with a local option alcohol issue on the ballot. The two other ballot issues, each calling for different alcohol options under state law, failed.

Local officials said one of the strongest supporters in the move to ban the sale of alcohol in Kotzebue was the Church of God.

The alcohol issue could be raised again in Kotzebue. State law authorizes a vote anytime, except within 30 days of the certification of the previous vote.

Kotzebue liquor establishment have 90 days to get rid of their stocks after the vote has been certified, so sales will be allowed for about three more months.

After that, sales will be illegal and all liquor licenses will be rescinded. People will still be allowed to bring alcohol in to Kotzebue for their own consumption.