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**PROVINCE ANNOUNCES MODERNIZED LIQUOR LAWS  
COME INTO EFFECT APRIL 1**

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**Changes will Provide Enhanced Entertainment Options for Manitobans,  
Reduced Red Tape, Improved Public Safety: Ministers Chomiak, Lemieux**

Manitoba's modernized liquor laws will come into effect April 1 and will introduce new hospitality opportunities, eliminate red tape and improve public safety, Mineral Resources Minister Dave Chomiak, minister responsible for the Liquor and Gaming Authority of Manitoba, and Tourism, Culture, Heritage, Sport and Consumer Protection Minister Ron Lemieux, minister responsible for Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries, said today.

"This is a complete overhaul of 60-year-old legislation and introduces more choices for consumers while creating greater flexibility and cutting red tape for the hospitality industry," Minister Chomiak said. "It also introduces new measures to give citizens and municipalities more input into licensing of venues in their communities."

The new law creates the Liquor and Gaming Authority of Manitoba (LGA), bringing regulatory oversight for liquor and gambling under one roof, the minister said. For business, this creates a single inspection process and single application to serve liquor and license video lottery terminals. For families and community groups, this means a single online application for liquor and raffles when hosting socials.

"We encourage businesses to take advantage of the new rules and bring forward ideas for new venues that will enhance the hospitality industry in Manitoba," Minister Chomiak said. "For the Year of Music, we are offering restaurants and other licensees the chance to operate as live music venues during the Junos and throughout the year. We are also offering a new live entertainment licence that makes it attractive to open a small, live music venue."

"Increasing flexibility and choice around the regulation of liquor service will be a boon to the hospitality and music industries and create positive experiences for Manitobans and our guests," said Minister Lemieux. "The extended hours during the Olympic men's hockey gold-medal game were a good example of the new attitude and an example of the kinds of new opportunities we hope to see during the Junos and the Year of Music."

"We are very pleased to see the government take action to modernize regulations that have long concerned our members. With these new liquor laws, the province has delivered on its promise to cut red tape and allow us to enhance the experiences we can offer our customers," said Dwayne Marling, vice-president of Restaurants Canada. "The flexibility shown by the new regulatory authority for special events like the men's hockey gold-medal game and the upcoming Junos and Year of Music is very encouraging."

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“Modernizing Manitoba’s liquor laws will benefit the hospitality industry and the entire provincial economy. We feel this has been done in a responsible way that benefits restaurants and our patrons,” said Scott Jocelyn, executive director of the Manitoba Restaurant and Foodservices Association. “We look forward to an exciting year ahead as these changes are implemented and we celebrate the Year of Music.”

“Hotels are always seeking new and innovative ways to serve their customers,” said Jim Baker, president and CEO, Manitoba Hotel Association. “We believe these changes will provide positive new opportunities for our industry.”

In addition to new hospitality opportunities, the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission and Manitoba Lotteries Corporation will legally merge on April 1 to form the Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries Corporation. The merger was announced in 2012 to increase efficiencies, reduce red tape and achieve cost savings, while enhancing customer services.

To date, the corporation has identified \$6.1 million in accumulated merger savings that will be realized by March 31. An additional \$4.8 million in operational saving has been identified over the next two years with no layoffs.

Included in the law governing the new corporation is a mandate that two per cent of net revenue of Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries be allocated to responsible gaming and responsible liquor consumption initiatives.

The modernized liquor laws follow extensive consultations with the public, the hospitality industry as well with law enforcement and justice officials, Minister Chomiak said.

In support of the Year of Music, Manitoba Liquor and Lotteries is sponsoring a new free mobile phone and tablet app called Manitoba Live that helps music fans find concerts in venues and clubs in Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba. Locally designed and developed by Manitoba Music, the iOS-compatible app features the most up-to-date concert and festival listings, Minister Lemieux said. Music fans will be able to instantly find live music events by venue, date and artist, and search which shows are happening close to them at any given time.

**MANITOBA'S NEW LIQUOR REGULATIONS**

Highlights of the new liquor regulations include:

- More options for consumers and less red tape for business:
  - streamlining categories of liquor licences from 12 to three – service, sales and manufacturing;
  - increasing convenience by allowing customers to order liquor without food in dining rooms, as long as half the dining room is available for food service or serving food, and eliminating requirements that restaurants maintain a food-to-liquor sales ratio;
  - expanding consumer choice by eliminating outdated food-service and menu requirements, recognizing the diversity of dining options available in and around Manitoba;
  - encouraging entertainment and local talent by creating a new licence category for small live entertainment venues with no requirement for an on-site kitchen and hot food service, allowing for food to be brought in from off-site patrons;
  - offering more options for special events: as part of Manitoba's Year of Music, restaurants and hotels can apply to operate as a live entertainment venue up to 12 times during 2014. (Applications will be accepted by the LGA beginning April 1.);
  - providing more flexibility for special authorizations to extend hours of service in cases of events of community, municipal, provincial and national significance, as was done for the Olympic men's hockey gold-medal game;
  - allowing customers the option of enjoying a drink at licensed hair and beauty salons and spas and options for art galleries that wish to obtain a liquor licence, under flexible food-service options that fit their business model;
  - allowing new options to hotel beverage rooms that want to diversify to operate like dining rooms and host day-time family-oriented events focused on food service before 9 p.m.;
  - establishing a single online application for socials for liquor and raffle permits and eliminating outdated bottle limits and quotas, with the focus on enforcing the responsible service and consumption of alcohol at social events rather than on counting bottles;
  - creating a brand new licence category called Unique Hospitality Experience to facilitate exceptional and distinct business proposals that cannot be accommodated within another licence category; large multi-use complexes will no longer have to deal with a variety of different licences for their different spaces, but can get one licence that will be flexible to their needs to maximize what they can offer to their community;

- expanding consumer choice by eliminating holiday sale and service restrictions to reflect Manitoba's cultural diversity (Remembrance Day restrictions will remain in place); and
- standardizing hours of operation (operators will set their own hours within these established standards):
  - service licensees – 9 a.m. to 2 a.m., seven days a week;
  - sales licensees (Liquor Marts, liquor vendors and specialty wine stores) – 8 a.m. to midnight, seven days a week; and
  - hotel beer vendors – 8 a.m. to 2:30 a.m., seven days a week.
    - Note: Municipalities retain the ability to place restrictions on hours and days of sales and service within their communities.
- Enhanced public safety and community input:
  - strengthening police powers and licensee obligations to address community safety concerns specific to liquor sales, service and consumption and tangential issues such as bootlegging, gang colours and threats of violence;
  - improving citizen input into liquor applications and community concerns including dispute resolution and mediation processes at the administrative level;
  - including new and/or updated sections that are intended to address chronic problems with 'party houses';
  - clarifying the long-standing practice that all required municipal zoning and approvals are a pre-condition of obtaining a liquor licence and that observing local bylaws is a condition of retaining a liquor licence;
  - simplifying the language used in the legislation and regulation easier to make it easier for licensees and the public to read and understand; and
  - eliminating the Liquor Licensing Board to speed licensing, complaint and hearing processes.