



For more information, contact:
Mike Gowrylow
(360) 534-1610

Spirits sales up 2.9 percent for first four months of privatization

OLYMPIA – Dec. 4., 2012 – Despite some serious stockpiling in May, spirits sales by volume were 2.9 percent higher during the first four months of privatization than they were a year earlier, the Washington State Department of Revenue reported today.

Nearly 13.6 million liters were sold from June through September 2012 compared to 13.2 million a year earlier when state liquor stores were in operation.

The average retail price of a liter of spirits, including taxes, was \$24.09 in September, compared to \$21.58 at state liquor stores a year earlier, an 11.6 percent increase. That equals a nearly \$2 increase for a standard 750 ml bottle, to \$18.07 from \$16.19 last year.

The overall numbers mask a divergence between consumer purchases at retail stores and purchases by bars and restaurants. Consumers purchased 7.9 percent more spirits during this period while on-premise businesses bought 12.6 percent less.

On-premise purchasing presumably is down because businesses purchased substantially more liquor in May 2012, the last month state liquor stores were in operation, than they did a year ago. Bars and restaurants may still be working down their inventories, but higher prices, weaker demand and supply issues also may be factors.

The Department has begun posting monthly sales data online. Go to http://dor.wa.gov/Content/AboutUs/StatisticsAndReports/stats_SpiritsTaxes.aspx for a detailed spreadsheet that includes tax revenues generated by the liquor sales and liquor liter taxes.

###