Task force concludes teen alcohol sale study

By MIKE DUNNE
Advocate staff writer

A task force looking for ways to cut the availability of alcohol to minors concluded four weeks of fact finding Thursday and will begin to formulate recommendations to the Metro Council.

Prosecutors were the last to give their suggestions to the committee, which also heard from the head of the state motor vehicle department.

Marcus Wright of the Parish Attorney’s Office passed on that office’s recommendations, including:
• Paying off-duty police when testifying in family court as is done in district court.
• Stressing enforcement in order to get offenders into the system to benefit from established programs.
• Regulations to reduce fake identification such as fraudulent drivers licenses.
• An awareness program.

“We have investigations planned, . . . things scheduled that will keep retailers on their toes,” Wright said.

Warren Hebert of the District Attorney’s staff said more stringent enforcement is needed.
He suggested that retailers found selling alcohol to minors be fined on first offense, have their licenses suspended 10-30 days on second offense and have their licenses revoked for one year on third offense.

“Attack the adults who are violating the law and you’ll go a long way” to cutting availability, Hebert said.

He also favors more parental responsibility.

Hebert also would like to see possession of alcohol by a minor be made against the law.

Clarification of the open container law needs to be addressed, because no one is sure that it covers an open container in a personal vehicle, he said.