

LEAVITT NAMES NON-LDS WOMAN TO ALCOHOL PANEL

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If Gov. Mike Leavitt has his way, Utah's Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission soon will include a non-Mormon, a social drinker and a second Democrat.

But the governor is not taking drastic measures to shake up the five-member commission, which governs sales of liquor, wine and beer in the state.

All he's doing is appointing Mary Ann Mantes, wife of former state Sen. George Mantes, to the commission. Mantes is all three — a non-Mormon (she's Greek Orthodox), a social drinker and a Democrat.

If her appointment is confirmed by the Utah Senate, Mantes will fill the unexpired term of Vickie McCall, who resigned from the commission to seek the Republican nomination for the 1st District congressional seat now held by Rep. Jim Hansen.

Previously, McCall had been the only non-Mormon and only social drinker on the commission.

The four existing commissioners are all non-drinking men and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Three of the four are attorneys, two of the four are Republicans and one is an independent. Ted Lewis has been the lone Democrat on the commission.

Senate President Al Mansell, R-Sandy, said he supports the governor's appointment of Mantes and predicts she will be confirmed. But he downplayed the significance of Mantes' status as a non-Mormon and social drinker.

"I think the more important part there is that you have people with diverse attitudes" serving on the commission, Mansell said.

Mantes joins a commission emerging from a period of controversy during which it was forced by the 10th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to change its advertising rules for liquor, wine and heavy beer. The court ruled the state's laws against such advertising were unconstitutional.

Brian Barnard, the attorney who successfully sued to change those advertising laws, called the appointment of Mantes a "step in the right direction."

"The fact that there's a female voice, it's encouraging to have that kind of diversity," Barnard said. "What I think would be very useful would be to have somebody on the commission who had experience in the hospitality industry, who had some experience in the liquor industry, who had some knowledge of how that works."

Commission Chairman Nicholas Hales also applauded Leavitt's choice.

"I think what Gov. Leavitt is trying to do is find the right people, the best people for the placement, and I think she fills that role," Hales said of Mantes. "I think she's an excellent selection."

State law permits no more than three members from one political party to serve on the commission.

Hales said the commission membership does reflect diversity in personal backgrounds, political affiliations and experience. He said there is little relevance in whether or not a commissioner drinks because the commission does not make the laws governing alcohol in Utah, it only enforces them.

Mantes was unavailable for comment Friday. She is a former Tooele School District teacher who has been involved in the Tooele County Chamber of Commerce and served on the Tooele County Youth Center Board. She is a past president of the Tooele City library board and has

been a member of the state library board.

The Westminster College graduate currently serves on the Judicial Nominating Commission for the 3rd District Court, is a past vice chairman of the Tooele County Democratic Party and a delegate to the state Democratic convention. Mantes, now a Salt Lake resident, has two children and two grandchildren.