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Gurnee gives ice cream trucks cold shoulder New law restricts street vendors to keep kids safe; [Lake Edition]

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Abstract (Document Summary)

Port Arthur in south Texas kicked mobile ice cream vendors off its streets last year. Port Arthur's action and ordinances such as the one passed in Gurnee have caught the attention of the Philadelphia-based International Association of Ice Cream Vendors.

As part of the license fee, Gurnee police will conduct criminal background checks of ice cream truck drivers. Along with a \$100 business license, an owner will pay \$50 for each employee's background check and \$20 for a vehicle inspection.

Familiar tunes such as "Pop Goes the Weasel" also must fade from Gurnee's streets, at least when played from a speaker mounted on an ice cream truck. The new ordinance only allows mechanized bells or chimes while a truck is moving.

Full Text (496 words)

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Ice cream truck drivers are finding their freedom has melted in one Lake County town.

Stopping short of banning the mobile frozen-treat purveyors - which has been done in a south Texas city - the Gurnee village board this week agreed to slap various restrictions on ice cream trucks because they are possible safety hazards to children.

Other Lake County villages such as Lake Zurich and Vernon Hills already have been charging fees for ice cream truck licenses. A license runs \$50 in Lake Zurich and \$100 in Vernon Hills.

While applauding some restrictions that are becoming more commonplace in his business, one longtime ice cream vendor said issues such as child safety are overblown.

"Which is safer? A child right in front of his house or wandering two or three miles away?" asked Jeff Anderson of Curbside Ltd. in Aurora, on Tuesday.

Until Gurnee's local law was passed Monday, ice cream vendors only needed to buy a \$10 license to roam the village.

Now, the truck owners must pay a minimum \$170 annual fee and agree to sell treats only from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sales also cannot occur from the driver's side of a truck or to anyone on a roadway.

Familiar tunes such as "Pop Goes the Weasel" also must fade from Gurnee's streets, at least when played from a speaker mounted on an ice cream truck. The new ordinance only allows mechanized bells or chimes while a truck is moving.

Gurnee Police Chief Robert Jones said the ordinance was crafted because of safety concerns for children and complaints about loud

music coming from the ice cream trucks.

"We want them to stop the music so we don't have kids running across the street," Jones said.

Although the new law is currently in place, Gurnee police Cmdr. Jay Patrick said it won't be fully enforced until next spring.

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Anderson said his family has been selling ice cream from trucks for about 50 years in the Fox Valley. He said some vendors cause their own problems by playing music too loudly and that such action should be restricted.

But Anderson questions why municipalities more often are telling ice cream vendors to buy licenses, but do not require them for pizza delivery drivers or other similar services.

As part of the license fee, Gurnee police will conduct criminal background checks of ice cream truck drivers. Along with a \$100 business license, an owner will pay \$50 for each employee's background check and \$20 for a vehicle inspection.

Several West suburban towns, such as Glendale Heights and Streamwood, have enacted rules for ice cream drivers. For example, vendors may sell ice cream in Streamwood only if they are free of "infectious or contagious diseases."

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