

Blitz-Weinhard cuts prices by 15 percent

PORTLAND (AP) — Blitz-Weinhard Co. has dropped the price of its Blitz beer by 15 percent in an effort to regain sales lost because of Oregon's recession and changing beer-drinking trends, the company announced Tuesday.

"Because of the recession here, the marketplace has gone to lower-priced beers," said Fred Wessinger, president of the Portland-based brewery.

"We are positioning ourselves right back into the market where we used to be," he said about the reduction that has put a \$2.19 price tag on Blitz in the supermarket, compared to the \$2.49 price before Feb. 1.

Blitz used to be the best-selling suds in Oregon. In 1971-73, 31.5 percent of beer sold in the state carried the Blitz label, said Gene Clark, advertising director.

Consumption has steadily declined since that peak to an 8 percent to 10 percent share of beer sales last year in Oregon,

which places Blitz "somewhere around fifth or seventh place," Clark said.

Wessinger said the price reduction is expected to boost sales by 25 percent.

Although distribution is concentrated in Oregon and southwestern Washington, the company also sells its flagship brand in Idaho and California.

Clark said generic or plain-label brews have taken some of Blitz's business, as have "premium-priced" brands, such as Budweiser and Miller, and the "super-premiums," such as Michelob and Blitz's own Henry Weinhard's Private Reserve.

But most of Blitz's sales have been taken by the new light or low-calorie brews and other regional beers such as the Olympia Brewing Co.'s Hamms, and Rainier Brewing Co.'s Rainier and Heidelberg brands.

He said the price change puts Blitz back in competition with those brands, and leaves the Olympia brand at the top of

the price list in the "popular-priced" or "regional" beer category.

"Consumers are more price-conscious than they have been. They are looking for good value for their money," Clark said. "We may be looking here at a resurgence of the old Western beers — that price structure and the way it used to be. In a way, we're getting back to regionalized preference."

In addition to Henry Weinhard's Private Reserve and Blitz, the brewery that Wessinger's great grandfather, Henry Weinhard, started in 1856 also makes the Olde English 800, a malt liquor, and the "economy-priced" Bohemian Club.

The brewery also produces all Pabst Brewing Co. products for the West Coast and for export to Asia. Pabst bought Blitz-Weinhard in 1979, but the Portland brewery is still locally run by Wessinger and his brother,

William.

Clark said a new advertising campaign for Blitz is being planned, but it will not focus on the price reduction.

"The campaign will basically associate Blitz with the state of Oregon," Clark said, "which is basically what we have been doing for the last 10 years anyway."

Wessinger said the company that employs 300 has not been forced to lay off anyone, and that the price-reduction move is expected to boost sales and employment.

Until Blitz's hoped-for increased sales roll in, Wessinger said the slack is being made up in revenues from the brewery's hottest seller, Henry's.

"When we rolled Henry Weinhard's out, we used Blitz funds," he said. "Now that Henry's stands on its own, the situation has turned around."

The Wessingers are very proud of Henry's, which, after a

humble beginning in 1977, accounted for 60 percent of the brewery's production in 1981. The brew is estimated to account for 70 percent of Blitz production this year.

Despite the Blitz losses, the brewery's sales have increased markedly because of its higher-priced Henry Weinhard's, Clark said. Sales of Henry's rose 33 percent last year, and already account for 50 percent of the super-premium beer sales in Oregon and in the Seattle area.

The company will begin test-marketing Henry's in Austin, Texas, next week, and if successful, a marketing effort is planned for Dallas, Wessinger said. In addition to Oregon and Washington, Henry Weinhard's is sold in California, Idaho, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico.

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MEETINGS

The Psychology Club will meet today at 3:30 p.m. in Room 111M, EMU. All members — old and new — please come.

A Women in Transition support group for women returning to school will meet Thursday at 9 a.m. in Century Room E, EMU. For more information, call Mary or Joyce at 686-4099.

The Incidental Fee Committee will hold budget hearings today in the EMU (room to be posted). Schedule: 4 p.m., Muslim Student Association; 4:30 p.m., CSPA Graduates; 5 p.m., OSL; 5:30 p.m., Panhellenic; 6 p.m., SBA.

SPEAKERS

A computer-illustrated lecture on developing decision-making processes in architecture will be given today by Stephen Tang, a University architecture professor, at 7:30 p.m. in Room 123, Science I.

"Crisis in the Humanities" is the topic of a lecture today by Eugen Weber, history professor and dean of the College of Letters and Science at the University of California, Los Angeles. Eugen's talk, set for 8 p.m. at the Gerlinger Hall Alumni Lounge, will be followed by a reception. The program is open to the public without charge.

SEMINARS

An ongoing stress reduction/relaxation seminar will be held Thursday from

4:30-5:30 p.m. in the Stafford dormitory lounge. Open to all students, free of charge.

WORKSHOPS

"Economics and Children" is the topic of a workshop today at 7 p.m. in Room 137, Gilbert Hall. The workshop, part of the "Group Marriage Workshop — Personal Lifestyle Design" series offered through SEARCH, focuses on living in a multiple adult family. For more information, call 345-5626.

The second of a three-part series of seminars for area youths on native traditions of the Pacific Northwest is scheduled for Saturday at the University's Museum of Natural History. The event, open to fourth through 12th grade schoolchildren in the Eugene, Springfield and Bethel school districts, will include a discussion of winter activities of traditional cultures in the Pacific Northwest: drumming, basketweaving, jewelry making and tracking demonstrations, and traditional storytelling from the Columbia River region. Each workshop is limited to 50 youths. To pre-register or for further information, contact the University Museum of Natural History at 686-3024 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. or Twila Souers, District 4J Natives Program coordinator, at 687-3489.

MISCELLANEOUS

Journalism majors: interested in being a peer advisor? Stop by the Journalism Peer

Advising office, Room 311-D, Allen Hall, this week and find out how you can join next term. Questions? Call 686-3715.

Ash Wednesday Services with imposition of ashes will be held today at the Koinonia Center Chapel, 1414 Kincaid St., at 12:30 and 4:30 p.m.

"Soviet Jewry Day" today in the EMU Lobby from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the Hillel table.

The national president of the Society of Professional Journalists, Steven Dornfeld, will be on campus today. He will hold a press conference at 9:30 a.m. in the Turnbull reading room, Room 211, Allen Hall. A brown bag lunch and discussion session will follow in Room 108, EMU, from noon to 1:30 p.m. All interested students are invited to attend.

The Baha'i Campus Association will have an information table in the EMU lobby today from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The Lane County Chapter of the American Red Cross will hold its free monthly blood pressure clinic from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Thursday at the Chapter House, 150 E. 18th Ave.

Ash Wednesday — Roman Catholic services at 12:30 p.m. at Sacred Heart Chapel, 5 and 9 p.m. at the Newman Center, 18th Avenue and Emerald Street.

POLICY

The Emerald's briefs column is the re-

sponsibility of the news/editorial department and is open to anyone wishing to announce meetings, lectures, seminars, exhibits, scholarships, or miscellaneous events. Briefs are run once and they are subject to space limitations. They must be typed and triple-spaced in a 65-character margin. Include all pertinent information. Also, list a name and phone number in case we have questions, and the date you want the brief run. Events with donations or admission charges will not be accepted unless the organization is non-profit. All items must be turned in by noon the day before publication at the Emerald office, Room 300, EMU. If you have a question, contact John at 686-5511.

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