

Oregon's second-largest hop grower adds on-farm brewery

By JAN JACKSON
For the Capital Press

ST. PAUL, Ore. — B&D Farms, Oregon's second largest hop grower, will soon add an on-farm craft brewery.

Leading the operation is 26-year-old Austin Smith, who is a fifth generation hop farmer. He believes he can pull the best hop cones from the drying room into his own brewing vats and make the best beer anywhere.

Born, raised and schooled in the heart of the Willamette Valley, Austin graduated with an agriculture degree from Linn Benton Community College. With partners Jace Kelly and Tyler Bothwell, he expects to be open as Trellis Brewing Co. by early summer.

"On the hop farm side of things, it was pretty natural to pick up a knack for beer making," Austin said. "It was 2014, when my friends and I started making beer in my garage. By 2016, my uncle (Ben Smith) suggested we turn an old workshop we weren't using into a meeting room or a brewery or something, and that's all the encouragement I needed."

His father, Dave Smith, agreed that "as long as he could get free beer and a



Austin Smith is a fifth-generation hop grower and first-generation brewer.

Jan Jackson/For the Capital Press

place to hold meetings, he was in," Austin Smith said.

Austin, who likes brewing with friends over working alone, met his partners in college. They started with an online recipe downloaded to their cell phones.

"We did a lot of experimenting with hop, malt and

yeast combinations and we got a lot of start-up help from highly awarded and decorated home brewers like Tom Litwin and Paul Long from Newberg," Austin said. "Of all of the regulations from the county, OLCC (the Oregon Liquor Control Commission) and the Department of

Ag we had to meet to run a successful commercial brewing operation, renovating the old building was probably the toughest."

They had to redo the whole ceiling electrical wiring to bring it up to fire code, add new plumbing, make it handicap accessible and meet

all the commercial access and parking codes for county roads, he said.

"We chose our old 1980s workshop to house the brewery, because it sits in the midst of the hops fields adjacent to our hop processing operation. Two years ago, I drew a rough sketch of what I wanted and

the power equipment it was going to take to run it," he said "My aunt and I then sat down and worked on how to use materials around the farm to carry out our true-to-the-farm theme."

The walls in the tasting room are made of shiplap wood that came from a 1930s migrant camp and the bar is a thick highly polished timber they found on the farm.

Hoping to pull craft beer aficionados from Portland and beyond, Austin is most eager to serve the people in his hometown of St. Paul as well as the bicyclers, kayakers, fishermen and wine country tourists that travel the back roads to the river. By next year he hopes to add the staff he needs to offer "from the ground into the glass" tours during commercial hop harvest.

"My great-great grandfather started raising hops in 1895, but because we also raise sweet corn, beans, grass seed and nursery stock, I've always just called myself a fifth-generation farmer," Austin said. "Now I can add that I'm a first-generation brewer."

For more information on Trellis Brewery and Tasting Room, email Austin at austinsmith7710@gmail.com.

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