

SUMMER'S HOWL

The 2006 Oregon Brewer's Festival is upon us. BY DOUGLAS E. FUCHS



The first primal scream usually starts as the sun sets. A kindly, even shy man or woman, drinking a beer, will suddenly and without cause bellow a deep, long and powerful howl into the cooling air. Tapping into the universal primitive nature of the large crowd, the single scream takes hold and evolves into a cascading roar that rises into the air, until the entire mob is screaming into a setting sun.

And then, as quickly as the screaming of human beasts rises and disappears into the dusk, the community roar tapers through the air, and everyone realizes at once that another great beer bash has officially begun.

The 19th Annual Oregon Brewers Festival (OBF) will tap the best beers the country has to offer from July 27-30 at Tom McCall Waterfront Park in Portland. The beer bash is North America's largest gathering of independent brewers with a reputation as being the best opportunity to taste world-class brew in the world. Seventy-two breweries offer handcrafted brews to more than 50,000 beer lovers during the four-day event.

Unusual for a major beer festival, the OBF is a non-judging event, designed to allow the public to sample and savor brews from some of the nation's finest breweries and draw their own conclusions.

"Brewer's will brew a real special batch of beer created just for the OBF instead of sending their flagship beer that gets sent to all other beer festivals," said Chip Hardy, owner of The Bier Stein in Eugene. "The OBF is a huge hop festival because brewers send their hop soup India Pale Ales and hopped up strong ales."

Beer is the focus of the event, and both classic and innovative beer styles are represented. Brewers from all around the country show off at the OBF, creating what is known in hop circles as "Four Days Of Beer Nerd Heaven." But be careful, because when brewers show off, they tend to create very strong and hoppy brew. Newbies to the OBF jog to each beer tent, screaming with the others at first, but drinking full mugs of strong India pale ales, winter ales and barley wines. By nightfall, the newbies are bent on the ground babbling to tent poles with glazed eyes, staring deeply into a half mug of beer deeply debating whether to drink the strange liquid or use the stuff as hair conditioner. The final hours are spent strategizing how to stand up.

Veterans of the OBF "walk the line" first starting on Thursday. They read the booklet that details participating brews and breweries and walk to each beer tent to

locate their "target" brews, usually unique beers that won't last until Sunday. Thursday is for tasting the mild beers, especially fruit and cream ales, finishing with a couple of barley wines or Belgian tripels.

On Friday, these professional beer geeks arrive at the festival grounds early with two mugs in hand, one for beer and one for water. They slowly yet meticulously work through all the target brews. On Saturday, during the heat of the day, veterans drink the lagers and sum-

mer brews while smoking huge stinky cigars. When the screams begin, the drinking starts in earnest. By Sunday, most of the signature beer is gone, and veterans drink up the remaining India pale ales.

The taps start pouring on Thursday from 4 to 9 pm; on Friday and Saturday from noon to 9 pm; and on Sunday from noon to 7 pm. The primal screaming starts at dusk. More information about the Oregon Brewer's Festival is available by visiting www.oregonbrewfest.com

THE BUSINESS OF BREW

Beercrafting gives Oregon a big boost. BY ROB WEISS

Usually when you think about beer, you think of a cold, crisp, refreshing beverage that tastes great on a hot summer day just like today. Most people never think of the economics of the beer industry and its effect on our state and, for that matter, on the nation.

There is no doubt beer is big business, especially here in Oregon. This state has been at the forefront of the "craft" beer industry since the late 1980s when the microbrew craze took off. Oregon offers more breweries per capita than any other state in the country, and the economic impact of the industry is staggering.

The economic ripple effects of the brewing industry have a positive impact on many different types of businesses. Packaging companies bottle and label beer. Shipping companies move the beer to the distribution points, both wholesalers and retailers. Retail outlets benefit from the sale of beer in supermarkets, taverns and restaurants. The growth of barley and hops helps agriculture in the state. Brewfests such as the Oregon Brewers Festival bring tourists by the tens of thousands. These people in turn pump millions of dollars into the local economy for everything from hotel rooms to restaurants.

There are currently 60 brewing companies in the state operating 80 facilities. Thirty-eight of these breweries operate in the Portland metro area alone, more than any other metro area in the world.

Last year, Oregon breweries produced 683,000 barrels of beer or the equivalent of 1.34 million kegs, or 226 million bottles of beer. Roughly 10 percent of this was sold in Oregon. Some 38 percent of all the draft beer consumed in the state was produced in Oregon. Oregon is second in the nation in hops production and ninth in the production of barley.

The total economic impact of the beer industry on Oregon's economy is calculated at \$2.24 billion. From this almost a billion was from retail sales, wholesale brewing and distribution. Oregon businesses in the industry paid \$46.4 million in federal excise taxes and \$6.7 million in state excise taxes. Other Oregon businesses directly attributable to the industry paid another \$176 million in federal taxes and \$108 million in state taxes.

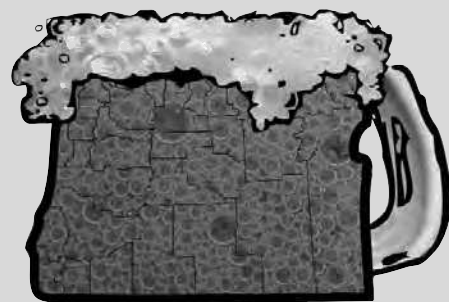
State wages for employees within the industry totaled \$732 million dollars. These jobs range from bartenders to distribution drivers, from CEOs of wholesale operations to farmers growing hops. About 3,800 Oregonians work directly for breweries.

Nationally, the total economic impact of the beer industry is more than \$162 billion. This total is up \$18 billion over the last three years. The industry itself and the supporting secondary businesses provide more than 1.7 million jobs nationally paying \$54 billion in wages. Business and personal taxes generated on the federal, state and local levels amounted to more than \$21 billion. Consumption taxes exceeded \$9 billion.

So the next time you crack open a cold one remember that you are doing more than just drinking beer. You are contributing to an industry vital to our local, state and national economy.

Cheers!

For more information, visit websites for the Oregon Brewers Guild, National Beer Wholesalers Association, and the Beer Institute.



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