

Your **Business**

Cascade Lakes pledges to donate net profits to Central Oregon charities

BY SUZANNE ROIG
CO Media Group

Craft beer makers already brew beer for a purpose, but Cascade Lakes Brewing Co. is taking that up a notch by pledging to donate all its net profits to Central Oregon charities.

The brewery, which is among the oldest in Bend and has one of its largest production facilities in Redmond, is also stepping up its efforts to pay its workers above the industry standard wages, health insurance and a 401(k) retirement savings plan, as part of the announcement Tuesday.

“When my family and I bought into Cascade Lakes, we didn’t do it for the financial gain,” said Andy Rhine, company general manager. “We did it to move our family back to Central Oregon. It’s been our goal since day one.

“We have been blessed and fortunate enough that we have done well enough in others areas to make this step.”

Craft brewing is a collaborative industry, said Christina LeRue, Oregon Brewers Guild executive director. Often brewers will collaborate on a beer, sell time on a brewing system to other brewers and donate to charities. Cascade Lakes this week announced that it would donate all of its net profits going forward.

“The craft brewing industry is very much tied to its communities,” LeRue said. “You can find examples of this nationwide. Beer has been a facet for bringing folks together and our industry would not exist without our communities and their support.

“Giving back is just ingrained in who brewers are.”

Craft beer also is a big industry in the United States, contributing about \$76 billion to the U.S. economy, according to the Brewers Association, a trade group for craft brewers. In Oregon, there were an estimated 310 craft breweries in 2021, generating \$1.8 billion in economic impact, according to



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Joel Boswell stacks a pallet of product while working at the Cascade Lakes Brewing production facility in Redmond on Wednesday.



Andy Rhine, front row, and his sister Esme Rhine stand with fellow Cascade Lakes Brewing employees Karl Biedritzky, back row from left, Jeff Kelly, Ryan Schmiege and Camille Risdal at the company’s brewing facility in Redmond on Wednesday.

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the Brewers Association.

While not as big a step as Patagonia’s move to put the \$3 billion com-

pany in a special trust and a nonprofit organization, Cascade Lakes Brewing Co. has been donating funds and put-

ting charities in the public eye with specialty brews for several years. The company will donate to nonprofits that focus on stewardship, conservation and animal welfare, Rhine said.

“These are areas that are close to our hearts,” said Rhine. “We’ll donate whatever net profit we have from all the sales and do it annually to charities.”

At the brewery, it will all be about beer for a purpose, he said.

Past collaborations for a cause include, Pawsitive Pale Ale, with pictures of cats and dogs to benefit BrightSide Animal Shelter in Redmond, and Street Dog IPA to support Street Dog Hero, a foster-based pet rescue. A third specialty beer, Elk Camp IPA, benefited the Oregon Hunters Association.

Cascade Lakes donated a \$1 from every six pack sale to BrightSide and \$1 a pint sold to Street Dog Hero, too. At

the Sept. 25 5k fun run, Cascade Lakes was the beer sponsor for Street Dog Hero’s third annual event, Rhine said.

“We’re very dependent upon corporate donations,” said Diana Fischetti, Street Dog Hero executive director. “Most of our revenues come from donations. Corporations have a higher capacity to give than individuals. We would not be able to do the work we do without corporate donors like Cascade Lakes.”

Patricia Bowling, BrightSide executive director, said the shelter relies on donations to meet its mandate. From weekly bingo games to brewing up special IPAs, every time Cascade Lakes helps out and mentions BrightSide, it’s that much more exposure, Bowling said.

“Cascade Lakes has been supporting us for years,” Bowling said. “Cascade Lakes is the largest company that supports us continually. Keeping our name in the public’s eye has a huge benefit for us in generating support and volunteers.”

The brewery was founded in 1994. Last year it produced 7,000 barrels of beer and it is distributed in six states. It operates two brew pubs and will open a third on Reed Market Road in 2023, Rhine said. The Rhine family purchased the brewery in 2018 from previous owners Chris Justema, Rick Orzetti and Doug and Ron Kutella.

When the Rhines purchased the brewery they had no experience with beer making, but had business experience. The family hired Ryan Schmiege, who had worked at Deschutes Brewery as an assistant brewmaster.

“I was green when we bought into the business, now I’ve worked dozens of events and seeing the impact we can have through our product in the community has been rewarding,” Rhine said. “It’s made us go more aggressive. It’s more valuable than any monetary gain. I am fortunate to have the flexibility to make this move.”

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