

# Northeast Bend is becoming a brewery district

By JOSEPH DITZLER  
The Bulletin

BEND — The big bay door was wide open at North Rim Brewing's 3,000-square-foot brewery at High Desert Lane and Layton Avenue in an industrial park in northeast Bend.

Inside, brewmaster Chris Hudson, in shorts and a sweat-shirt from his former employer, Terminal Gravity, was bottling a batch of Twin Citra IPA. The warmth of a morning sun, filtered through an overcast sky, streamed into the south-facing building.

Hudson said it's the perfect spot for brewing.

"I like this because it's open, and there's not a lot of people out here," he said. "I can have the doors open. I never have to rush; it's a quiet environment. There's not a lot of rushing around or kegs banging around."

A corner of northeast Bend bounded, roughly, by Empire Avenue, Boyd Acres Road, Brinson Boulevard and NE 18th Street is home to seven breweries, most of them strictly production facilities, places where beer is brewed beyond the public eye and without the fuss and trappings of a brewpub.

Brewing companies, large and small, benefit from the industrial zoning; proximity to U.S. Highway 97; and a wastewater system that accommodates large water users. The area is also an enterprise zone, meaning businesses there may qualify for a break on the taxes they pay on new equipment.

However, brewers, like any business in Bend, must cope with the rising cost to buy or lease real estate and with increasing demands on the city wastewater treatment system, even as Bend works to expand the treatment facility and lay new lines. For now, Hudson looks on the bright side.

"I've never worked like this before," he said. "Being out here, working together, it's awesome."

North Rim recently collaborated on a beer with Oblivion Brewing Co., another small brewery just around the corner on Plateau Drive, he said. Myriad neighboring businesses also provide support. When Hudson needed a fitting for a brewery hose, he found it at Motion and Flow Control Products Inc., just around the corner. Another local business helped repair a large brewing tank. Two tap handle makers are located on the same block, and Paramount Supply Co., also on Plateau Drive, carries hardware suitable for brewing.

The northeast industrial quarter is also providing local breweries room to meet growing demand for their products and to try new methods. 10 Barrel Brewing, now a property of Anheuser-Busch InBev, in January submitted plans to the city for a 69,000-square-foot expansion of its brewery, more than double its existing size. The plans include a tasting room and restaurant.

Of the northeast breweries, only Bridge 99 Brewery, on Layton Avenue, has a tasting room, so far. North Rim manager Sharla Shields said the



Ryan Brennecke/The Bulletin

Dana Robles works on cleaning a tank during her shift at Boneyard Brewery in Bend. Northeast Bend is becoming a brewery district. The Bulletin reports Seven beer makers operate in the area.

Oregon Liquor Control Commission recently approved a tasting room at the brewery. It will open as soon as contractors can build it, she said.

## Dealing with wastewater

Northeast Bend makes sense as home for breweries because the wastewater system accommodates large users. Gravity alone carries wastewater to a nearby trunk line, said Russell Grayson, the Bend city engineer. In order to keep wastewater discharge by large users under control, the city reviews brewery expansion plans and restricts the amount and timing of wastewater discharges, he said.

Roger Lee, executive director at Economic Development for Central Oregon, said the agency has worked with brewers to enroll them in tax-abatement programs and to find space in which to expand, but the wastewater question is always a concern, he said.

"In the case of some of the brewing companies, one of our first recommendations to them is: 'Have you talked to the city about sewer and water capacity?'" Lee said. "That may have a much bigger impact than what space is available."

At North Rim, for example, wastewater is held in a tank and treated to correct its pH levels before it's discharged into the city system. That's typical of how breweries operate, Grayson said. They discharge their pretreated wastewater during off-peak hours to avoid taxing the wastewater treatment plant. North Rim, for example, while brewing 300 gallons of beer, creates 200 to 300 gallons of wastewater. The process involves not only

water used in brewing, but also in heating and cleaning the equipment, as well, Hudson said.

Grayson said the city expects brewers that expand production to address larger volumes of wastewater.

"A lot of times they will give us a flow, and as they expand their production we can work with them to store onsite what was originally approved," he said. "From the city perspective, we understand they want to increase their production, and we want to help them do that."

## Space issues

Sewer capacity is one hurdle; finding an appropriate space in which to expand on budget is another.

When 856 Brewing Co. LLC, which does business as the Crux Fermentation Project, decided to expand its production, company co-founder Paul Evers said he looked at sites from Portland to Hood River to La Pine. Crux already leased a warehouse on Plateau Drive, but Evers said he needed more room than it provided. He decided on a 20,000-square-foot building on NE 18th Street, the former site of fuel-cell maker IdaTech, a stone's throw from 10 Barrel Brewing Co. and across High Desert Lane from Crux's distributor, Columbia Distributing.

"We looked all over because we need to be very careful about making a commitment, one that made economic sense," Evers said. "We were weighing a lot of different variables, and we were very excited to find a site here in the city of Bend."

The Crux brewery on NE

18th Street started producing a pilsner and saison beer from a 20-hectoliter — about 17 barrels — brewing system in December, he said. The plan is to brew mainstay beers like Crux Farmhouse, Half Hitch and Cast Out on NE 18th Street and delegate the original brewpub at 50 SW Division St. to making further beer discoveries.

"The strategy, the objective we have behind this, is to be able to allocate this original brewery to experimentation, exploration, expanding our wood-aging program and our more complex beers," Evers said.

Closer to downtown Bend, the original Boneyard Beer brewery and tasting room on NW Lake Place is a familiar stop for beer tourists, but Boneyard also started brew-

ing in summer 2014 with a 50-barrel capacity system in a 13,000-square-foot building, also on Plateau Drive, north of Empire Avenue.

About 9,500 square feet is devoted to brewing; the rest is office space, said brewery co-owner Tony Lawrence. The brewery also plans a third location for tasting and retail sales sometime soon, he said.

Neither Crux nor Boneyard are actively pursuing wider distribution beyond Oregon and Washington, Evers and Lawrence said. In the past year, however, Boneyard has brought three "key players" aboard, Lawrence said: Mark Henion, former head brewer at Ninkasi Brewing, of Eugene; John Van Duzer, former head brewer at Cascade Lakes Brewing Co., of Redmond; and Nick Mur-

ray, a data and systems analyst and formerly of Odell Brewing Co., of Fort Collins, Colorado.

"We just kind of passed our five-year mark, so we look at our operations in a more grandiose scale than we had, not necessarily by volume, but just so we don't lose track of the project," he said. "We're definitely exploring the balance between professional and personal lifestyles."

## Top 30

Boneyard, Crux and 10 Barrel rank in the top 30 breweries in Oregon by the number of taxable barrels of beer sold in Oregon, but the northeast corner is home to other, smaller breweries like North Rim, Oblivion Brewing Co., on Plateau Drive, and Bridge 99 Brewery, on NE Layton Avenue. Craft Kitchen and Brewery LLC, also brews on NE Layton Avenue in a 3.5-barrel system but sells its beer primarily at its restaurant on Industrial Way, in the Old Mill District.

Co-owner Courtney Stevens said Craft lucked into the Layton Avenue building when the owner, from whom Craft leases its restaurant, offered up the space.

"He said he had a small, 1,000-square-foot spot for us; we could build it out to suit ourselves," she said. "It wasn't a turnkey operation. We wanted to start from scratch."

Brewery owners said they get together to talk business over a beer once in a while but, so far, have no plans to collaborate on anything like a common tasting room that shows off all the beer brewed in northeast Bend.

Stevens said that's something she'd like to see. Lawrence said he'd be open to the idea, too. Hudson had his own vision of what a northeast brewery district should look like.

"I would love to throw a huge block party," he said, "a big old party."

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