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Central Oregon Craft Beer Surge Unites Local Brewers

Independent Brewers Guild Forms to Rank Region as an International Craft Beer Destination

Bend, OR – May 8, 2012 – The brewing culture is hopping in Central Oregon, causing the region’s brewers to unite with the formation of a Central Oregon Brewers Guild (COBG). The nonprofit professional advocacy organization represents 12 of the region’s craft brewers including: 10 Barrel Brewing; Bend Brewing Co.; Boneyard Brewing; Cascade Lakes Brewing; Deschutes Brewery; Good Life Brewing Company; McMenamins Old St. Francis School; Silver Moon Brewing; Three Creeks Brewing, Brew Werks, Worthy Brewing and the new Crux Fermentation Project.

“We want people to think ‘craft beer’ when they hear ‘Central Oregon,’” said Garrett Wales, COBG President and partner of 10 Barrel Brewing Company. “We have this amazing comradery and talent among the Central Oregon Brewers, so a local Guild makes perfect sense for our region. We’re creating a craft beer culture because we’ve become one of the industry’s flourishing brewing communities in the United States,” he added.

According to Wales, The COBG will serve as the Central Oregon voice for the industry, providing local representation, education, promotion and collaboration. The Guild is set up to advocate for local brewers’ needs and establish positive partnerships with industry leaders, community members, retailers and legislators. The brewers of Central Oregon will continue to support the Oregon Brewers Guild while building the local organization to help cultivate and strengthen the region’s craft beer culture.

In 2010, Deschutes County brewers sold 106,115 barrels of beer -- or 27 percent of the total barrels sold in the state by Oregon breweries and brew pubs. That breaks down to 222 pints per Deschutes County resident of legal drinking age -- more than six times greater per capita than Oregon as a whole. That said, not all of these pints are being consumed by local residents. Export sales of Central Oregon brews are significantly on the rise with some Central Oregon brewers seeing a five-fold increase in production and National distribution since 2010. This increase represents a growing demand among distributors from the East Coast, Southwest and Colorado as they recognize Central Oregon’s influence in the brewing industry. In addition, Central Oregon tourists are contributing to the pint sales as the region becomes a destination location for craft beer enthusiasts.

Along with serving as a champion for the business of craft brewing in Central Oregon, Wales explained that the Guild will focus on outreach and education moving forward.

“Beer enthusiasts from all over the country will soon be enjoying annual Central Oregon craft beer events and festivals that rival those in Portland, Ashville and Philadelphia,” said Wales. “We want to grow our brewing community and expose retailers and beer enthusiasts to extraordinary new tastes.”

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Other plans for COBG include a comprehensive Central Oregon brewers' survey to assess the impact of the brewing industry on the local economy and identify opportunities for growth and improvement. The Guild is also exploring a partnership with Central Oregon Community College to create a brewer certification program that would support continued industry growth and workforce development in the region.

"We have a unique culture of collaboration, admiration and support among the brewers here in Central Oregon," said Wales. "We've created a craft beer community that is based on quality and a true passion for the art of brewing. We celebrate each other's successes and are working together to make Central Oregon a destination for high quality craft beer," he added.

According to Wales, Central Oregon breweries and brew pubs are joining the ranks of the region's most influential industries.

"We're talking about a dynamic, prosperous and professional industry that has a significant and growing business presence in our Region," said Wales. "In addition to bringing high quality craft brew products to consumers, we are supporting revenue, jobs, tourism and economic stability."

There are currently 107 brewing companies, operating 139 brewing facilities in 55 cities in Oregon. Wales added that Central Oregon is responsible for 450 (15%) of the 3,000 craft beer industry jobs created in the state of Oregon.

According to the Brewer's Association, craft beer consumption in the United State represents 4.9 percent by volume. As the second largest hop growing state in the country with a 2010 crop value of \$31,200,000, the Oregon Brewers Guild reports that Oregon is the second largest producer of craft beer in the United States. In addition, Oregon ranks in the Nation's top five for number of breweries per capita, craft beer production and craft beer consumption. For more National information, visit <http://oregonbeer.org/facts/>

For more information about the Central Oregon Brewers Guild or to schedule interviews with Wales or members of COBG, contact Linda Quon at (541) 617-1911 or lquon@quondc.com.

You can also visit COBG's website at <http://www.centraloregonbrewersguild.com/>

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