Every day in the news, we see examples of positive coverage featuring beer distributors across the country – and that’s because you have great stories to tell! Consider the following topics as you look for opportunities to get your business featured:

**Vast Selection of Beer Available to Consumers**
There has been tremendous growth in the American beer industry in recent years. During the 1980s, there were less than 50 breweries in the United States; today there are more than 3,000 breweries in operation.¹ There are thousands of labels of beer available to American consumers today.

This explosion of diverse brews demonstrates consumers’ appreciation for the product and excitement over the wide variety of flavors beer has to offer. Because beer distributors help new brands get to market, consumers benefit by having the choice between the largest international brands and the smallest local brews all on the same store shelf, restaurant list and bar tap. From Lambics to lagers, to pale ales and porters, there is a style and flavor for every occasion.

This tremendous choice and value in the beer market demonstrates the commercial value of beer distributors.

**Quality Jobs**
As a distributor, you provide quality jobs in your local community, great benefits and a positive work environment. Across the country, America’s 3,300 licensed, independent beer distribution companies employ 130,000 men and women and deliver $54 billion in total economic impacts.²

As the economy remains front and center for policymakers and, in turn, many media outlets, the economic value of beer distributors and the jobs you provide in your local community is an important story to tell.

**Community Involvement**
State and local alcohol laws create and maintain a safe and orderly marketplace for alcoholic beverages. As part of this system of safeguards, beer distributors are critical to the local implementation of and compliance with those laws.

Beer distributors also play a vital role in working to keep the communities where they live and work safe by sponsoring a vast array of programs to promote responsible consumption, combat drunk driving and work to eliminate underage drinking.

If your organization is teaming with a local charity or sponsoring a designated driver program to ensure safe drinking habits, this is a good story to promote, especially surrounding holidays (New Year’s Eve, St. Patrick’s Day, 4th of July, etc.).

**Environmental Sustainability**
Today’s technological advancements allow distributors to reduce their energy footprint. As distributors are looking for opportunities to be more energy efficient while also improving business, some have turned to solar panels while others have introduced new types of vehicles into their fleets. These stories can be a strong news hook around Earth Day or in the summer months when the media tend to cover high gas prices.

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² [http://nbwa.org/beer-report](http://nbwa.org/beer-report)
The first step in media outreach is identifying and targeting appropriate media. If you are announcing an award or publicizing the distribution of a new craft beer, print media may be the best target. If you are looking to do general promotion or have compelling visuals or audio to offer like a warehouse tour, broadcast media may be where you should focus your efforts.

Media Types
When determining whether a news outlet is appropriate for your particular story, consider the following:

- What are the newspapers in your market?
- What newspaper do most people read in the state or region?
- What are the local TV news stations that air in your market?
- What radio stations are popular among your colleagues and friends?
- Are there any regional or community magazines that cover your area?
- Does your community have any local news websites?
- Are there local beer bloggers who would appreciate the news?

Websites like epodunk.com, mondotimes.com and congress.org/congressorg/dbq/media can help you answer some of these questions.

Print
- **Format**: Longer stories, more depth
- **Visuals**: Often feature photos or graphics
- **Reporters**: Generally have specific beats (i.e. business, community, food & beverage, etc.)
- **Story Idea**: Announcement, employee profile, community involvement or economic contributions

Television
- **Format**: Visual, short, dramatic, dynamic
- **Interviews**: Live or taped
- **Visuals**: Background footage that is interesting, colorful and interactive
- **Reporters**: Typically generalists
- **Story Idea**: Warehouse tour, onsite interview or other strong visual hook

Radio
- **Format**: Generally short soundbites, short stories
- **Talk Radio**: Long format
- **“All News” Stations**: Longer stories, allow for more depth
- **Non-news Stations**: Often read wire copy or newspaper articles, most don’t produce their own news
- **Story Idea**: Business feature or local community involvement, have an audio or news hook

Digital & Social
- **Format**: Long and short stories, can include video and graphics
- **Instant transmission**
- **Regularly updated; you can affect it**
- **No filter”

Locating Reporter Contact Information
Once you have determined which news outlet you’d like to target, the next step is to research which of their reporters have covered related topics. This can be done using the search feature of the news outlet’s website or through a Google News search. Work to find a reporter who you think would be interested in your business or the beer industry – for example, someone with an interest in local businesses, food and beverage and community news.

After identifying the reporters you’d like to pitch, look at the outlet’s website to see if there is contact information or email addresses listed on the “Contact Us” page. If information is limited, call the outlet’s main phone number and ask to speak directly with the reporter. To find a list of beer blogs in your state, visit http://beerbloggersconference.org/directory.
Making the Pitch

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How to Pitch a Reporter

It is important to build personal relationships with reporters in order to potentially generate favorable coverage of your business and the beer distribution industry as a whole. Since a press release is often not enough to generate a story, it is recommended that someone from your organization reach out directly to local media to offer story ideas that include your key messages. Send a personalized, introductory email as a first step.

For bloggers, familiarize yourself with their recent posts and specific areas of interest. Make sure your pitch is relevant to them. Cite previous posts the blog has published and ask if they might have interest in covering a similar topic as it relates to your business.

Sample Pitch Email: Broadcast

When contacting a reporter via email, it's important to catch their attention right away with a quick, interesting subject line. Also, make sure you tell the reporter right away in the email what you can show them and what the viewer, listener or reader would learn.

Feel free to use the following sample language to guide your initial outreach. We encourage you to tailor this language to your own business and to incorporate any news or upcoming events related to your local community.

Subject Line: Beer Behind the Scenes

Dear [reporter’s name],

I’m writing to invite you to go behind the scenes of your local beer distributor for an economic and consumer story that would appeal to a wide range of viewers.

When you pop open a cold beer, do you know how that can or bottle got to you? Or that American consumers can choose from thousands of labels of beer? Or there are more than 3,000 breweries in the U.S. today? Or that 130,000 men and women are working to deliver fresh beer to you?

I would be happy to show you what it takes to get beer to market by taking you inside a beer distribution warehouse. [Name of your business] delivers beer to restaurants, pubs, convenience stores, grocery stores, ballparks, concert venues and other licensed retailers across our local community. You have probably seen our trucks driving down the streets of [name of your community].

At [name of your business], you’ll see [x number] of brands of beer, including labels from across the country [for example: including Vermont, Michigan, Delaware, Texas, California and Oregon]. See cases and kegs filled with a wide range of styles from Lambics and lagers to pale ales and porters.

Here’s an idea of the great visuals your viewers would see:

• Workers loading beer onto trucks for delivery (many work overnight to make deliveries as the sun rises)
• Cases and cases of beer coming off forklifts and kegs rolling off hand trucks
• Thousands of cases of beer (and hundreds of brands from around the country and around the world) stacked to the rafters of a temperature controlled warehouse
• The refrigerated keg room (kegs floor to ceiling)
• Distributors’ high-tech ability via barcodes and other tools to track every label on every route, which is valuable to ensure a fresh, safe product is in the marketplace (vital in recalls, virtually no other consumer product can claim such traceability)
• Logistics and marketing machine that helps bring beer to the American marketplace

I’m excited for you to see how beer gets to beer lovers in [name of your community]. I hope you agree a behind-the-scenes tour could be a colorful story that your viewers would really enjoy. I look forward to working with you on it.

Regards,

[Contact name]
[Title]
[Business/Organization]

[Contact phone number]
[Contact email address]
[Website, Facebook and/or Twitter links]
Follow-Up
Reporters receive hundreds of emails a day and may not respond. After sending a reporter your initial pitch, follow up with a phone call a couple days later. Once you identify yourself, it’s considerate to ask if a reporter is on deadline or if he or she has time to chat.

Here’s a sample telephone conversation with a reporter:

Hello my name is XX XX and I am with [COMPANY NAME]
I am following up on an email I sent you on [DATE]—do you happen to be on deadline?

If YES:
OK, I simply wanted to introduce myself and see if there was a time in the future we could discuss [COMPANY] in detail, as I would love to share with you how we are impacting the local economy by bringing beer to market.

If NO:
[COMPANY NAME] is a local beer distribution company that has been in business for X years and brings XX labels to market for the local area. We have a strong visual story to share and since we work with an interesting product, I wanted to see if you would be interested in coming to our warehouse or taking a ride with one of our trucks one day so we can give you a behind-the-scenes look at how beer arrives at local retailers each and every day.

If a reporter indicates that this isn’t a topic they cover, simply ask if they have any recommendations on someone else at the station or paper that may be interested.

Once you have piqued a reporter’s interest, be prepared to offer the following items:

• Warehouse tour and potential “ride along” in distributor truck
• Fun facts/recent statistics
• Direct interviews with company leadership and employees
• Company bio & executive bios
• Photos and/or video
• Recent company press releases (if applicable)

Identify two or three key messages you want to convey. Depending on the topic, these messages may include:

1. Beer distributors provide commercial value, as evidenced by...
   • Helping brewers of all sizes get to market and grow. This includes the more than 3,000 breweries in the U.S. and countless imported labels.
   • Wide variety of beer styles for the consumer: From Lambics and lagers to pale ales and porters, there is a style for every beer consumer regardless of taste.
   • Consumer choice: There is no other consumer product on the market that enjoys as much variety and selection as beer.

2. Beer distributors provide economic value, as demonstrated by...
   • Jobs: Number of employees at your distributorship, mentioning good solid jobs with benefits
   • Jobs: Local jobs supporting local workers and their families living in the local community
   • Jobs: Wide range of jobs including drivers, inventory specialists, receptionists, graphic designers, sales force, etc.
   • Note: You may wish to profile a specific employee who has worked at your business for a long period of time or who has a unique story. Many reporters like “human interest” stories.

3. Beer distributors provide regulatory value and are involved in their communities, as seen in...
   • Prime community locations (licensed retailers) where your deliveries go (stadiums, popular restaurants, etc.)
   • Ongoing efforts to promote responsible consumption, combat drunk driving and work to eliminate underage drinking
   • System of safeguards: Alcohol is different and we help keep it controlled within an orderly marketplace. When there is a product recall, we can trace impacted product and pull from shelves.
A media interview is a prime opportunity to advance your message. Preparation and focus are the keys to success in media encounters. A reporter’s objective is to get an interesting story; yours is to stay on message.

Preparation
In preparation for the interview, make sure you know as much as possible about the reporter’s audience. Knowing the typical reader, viewer or listener for a given media outlet will help you create, develop and tailor your key messages and anticipate questions. Consider the following “ABCs” of interview prep:

A. Ask Questions
Some questions to ask if you are contacted by a reporter (as opposed to when you have pitched the story) include:
- What’s the story about? What’s the angle?
- What are you hoping to learn in this interview?
- When is it going to be published or aired?
- Who else will you interview or have you interviewed?
- Will the interview be live or taped (for broadcast interviews)?
- How much time will you need?
- Where do you want to conduct the interview?
- What’s your deadline?
- What’s your telephone number, so I can get back to you?

B. Buy Time
- Never feel obligated to drop everything to immediately respond when a reporter calls you for an interview. They respect your time and, in most cases, will accommodate your schedule. However, understand that journalists have tight deadlines. Find out what their deadline is and offer to get back to them within a reasonable period, giving you time to prepare.

C. Consider Questions and Develop Answers
- Another key to preparing for an interview is to anticipate the questions a reporter may ask, including sensitive items. You may get a mix of both easy and hard questions designed to catch you off guard. Take time in advance to think through your responses and practice role playing if necessary. The most effective spokespersons introduce their key messages into the conversation at every credible opportunity.

The Importance of Staying on Message
Rather than participate in an interview that is disjointed or unfocused, staying on message helps you control your agenda and convey your message effectively.

Your job during the interview is to stick to these messages and steer the interview – and your responses – back to these message areas.

During an Interview
- Have a plan/set your agenda
- Remember your audience
- Anticipate what your opponents will say
- Be truthful
- Stick to three key messages
- Bridge back to your messages
- Give the headline first
- Use colorful sound bites
- Give examples
- Keep it simple
- Be brief
- Stay relaxed
- Follow up

Traps and Pitfalls
When covering advocacy, legislative and regulatory issues, some reporters may look for drama and conflict in a story. They may search for information or a quote that will make their story stand out from the competition. Most of the time, reporters will ask straightforward questions to obtain information.

Here are a few situations when reporters could use different interview techniques to probe an issue or elicit more compelling comments:

Hypothetical and speculative questions – Stick to “what is” not “what if” when asked such a question. Don’t speculate or answer hypothetical questions. Avoid speaking for others, as reporters often ask you to speculate what outside groups may say on the issue at hand.

Questions outside your expertise – When presented with a question outside your area of expertise, do not try to answer. Simply tell the reporter that you are not able to answer and offer to help find the person who can.
**Interview Checklist**

**BEFORE**
- Coordinate with PR/Communications team
- Pre-interview reporter
  - What is the story about?
  - Who else is being interviewed?
  - What is the deadline?
- Decide what you want to say
  - Develop key messages and proof points
- Remember the audience for the outlet
- Anticipate reporter questions
- Consider what your detractors will say
- Conduct recent news roundup: no surprises
- Role play with a colleague

**DURING**
- Stick to your key messages and proof points
  - Statement/Evidence/Conclusion/Stop
- Give the headline first
- Bridge back to key messages
- Speak in normal, “everyday” terms
- Use colorful soundbites – give examples/anecdotes
- Be truthful
- Keep it simple – be brief
- Stay relaxed
- It’s okay to say, “I don’t know, but I’ll get back to you”
- Remember you are always on the record

**AFTER**
- Update internal stakeholders as needed
- Send follow-up information to reporter as needed
- Look for the story
- Correct any misinformation with reporter
- If you are pleased with the story, be sure to share the news via email, your website and social media

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**Proprietary information**

Reporters sometimes ask questions in an attempt to secure proprietary data and information. Explain why you cannot give them specifically what they are asking for, and then tell them what you can give them – a closely related fact or figure that is suitable for public consumption.

**Loaded questions**

Don’t repeat negative or sensational words a reporter may use in a question.

When faced with such a question, respond with a generally positive statement and bridge to a key message with the following phrases:

- On the contrary . . .
- Actually . . .
- The fact is . . .
- Quite the opposite . . .
- The reality is . . .
- The point here is . . .

**Interruptions**

If a reporter interrupts you or doesn’t let you complete your point, try not to get flustered. Either let them interrupt you and come back to answer the question later or stop, listen patiently to the new question, and say you will address it in a moment.

**Paraphrasing**

There may be times when a reporter unfairly or incorrectly restates what you say. Stay calm and repeat your point clearly.

**Technical jargon**

Avoid jargon, buzzwords and complex terminology that can confuse reporters and their audiences. For example, rather than using terms like “three-tier system” that people outside of the industry will not understand, talk about the role distributors play in helping brewers get to market and delivering a wide variety of beer to retailers for adult consumers to enjoy.

**Humor**

Be careful using humor. It can backfire when an interviewer quotes you out of context, or if the humor is considered inappropriate by others. Best case, people do not understand your wit; worst case, you offend a reporter or a key audience.

**After the Interview:**

- Update your internal team and any stakeholders as needed.
- Send follow-up information to the reporter as requested.
- Be on the lookout for the story.
- Correct any misinformation with the reporter. Often, items published first online can be corrected quickly.

**Points to Consider:**

By making yourself available to journalists consistently, it’s clear to them that you are trying to be forthright and help them do their jobs. This tends to have a positive impact on the nature of their reporting, and they appreciate the resource. Additionally, cultivating such relationships gives you access to reporters for your proactive media efforts.

Be available, accessible and credible. Be a consistent and helpful resource, and be prepared to tell your story. If a reporter calls for comment, be or she is most likely going to run a story with or without your input, so it is usually beneficial to take the opportunity to help shape the content.
Building a working rapport with journalists is key to meeting everyone’s needs. In order to do so, you have to understand the news business.

**News is a deadline business.** A story that is not filed by deadline is wasted. Reporters are pushed to file today’s story today – however they can get it – and then move on to their next story. So get in front of a reporter early in the day and be responsive and timely in your correspondence.

**News is a simplification process.** In many cases, the more succinct your comments, the more likely a reporter will use them. Reporters have to compress time into a very limited space (column inches) or time allotment (broadcast seconds). Their stories have to be easily understood by the public with a limited attention span.

**News is highly stylized and packaged.** You must think like editors and reporters. The better the quality and presentation of information, the better the chances are of the story being used.

**Be mindful of information overload.** Today’s reporters are responsible for covering multiple beats and producing several stories daily. They receive hundreds of emails and dozens of phone calls every day, so it’s important that your pitch is clear, concise and persuasive.

**Letters to the Editor and Op-Eds:**
A common and fairly easy way to increase your share of voice is through opinion-editorials or letters to the editor.

Opinion-editorials offer you the opportunity to publish your view on a particular topic, piece of legislation or event within your community without the filter of a reporter. Do you ever see a story in your local paper that incorrectly portrays our industry and your business, or opens the door to discuss the value beer distributors provide? You can respond and correct the facts with a letter to the editor.

Here are some tips:
- **The Key:** Write well, be succinct and tell an engaging anecdote.
- **Timeliness is Everything:** Aim to send your letter to the editor the same day or the day after an article runs. Many papers will print letters to the editor the next day or the following day, so sending your response quickly via email increases your chance of being included in the conversation.
- **Less is Best:** Many papers have a specific word limit, which is generally posted on their websites. In general, aim to submit no more than 250 words.
- **Stick to One Point:** A letter to the editor should not read like a commercial – the paper will not run your letter if it comes across as a sales pitch for your company. This is an opportunity for your company to share your opinion on a particular topic, so clearly and concisely state your support or objections to the topic at hand and do not stray too far into other areas of interest. Give an example or anecdote where appropriate to provide interest.
- **Contact Information:** In your signature, make sure to include your name, title, company, email and mailing address. Papers will only print your name and company, and possibly your city, but all contact information is required for credibility and confirmation.

Here is an example of a letter to the editor penned by a beer distributor and a craft brewer in the state of Missouri that responds to an op-ed and communicates the role of beer distributors in helping craft brewers grow and providing consumers with a vast beer selection:

**ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH**

**Distribution system is key to craft brewers’ success**

June 2, 2014

America’s craft brewers are an American success story. With more than 2,800 breweries operating in the U.S. and a new brewery opening each day, craft beer provides significant contributions to the American beer industry and the overall economy.

“Antiquated, burdensome laws hurt craft brewers” (May 28) praised the entrepreneurial spirit for craft brewers, but wrongly criticized a system that has been key to their success. Craft beer’s exponential growth – 18 percent last year — has been propelled by the effectiveness of an independent, three-tier distribution system (brewer, distributor and retailer) and laws that support an open and transparent marketplace where brewers of all sizes can compete and gain access to all retailers of all sizes.

This distribution system, regulated by the states, provides the infrastructure for craft brewers to reach a wide network of retailers and customers. Local businesses like ours work to ensure consumers see a vast selection of beers on menus and in retail outlets. The system helps brewers like Springfield-based Mother’s Brewing build a name, establish a brand and generate a loyal following of consumers. Premium Beverage Sales in Springfield and its 60 employees are proud to be part of this system that promotes new and exciting brews to retailers — large and small — and deliver a wide selection of beer tailored to consumer preferences.

In short, brewers aim to make good beer, and distributors aim to ensure that good beer reaches retailers for consumers to enjoy. This is an exciting time in the beer industry, and America’s 3,300 beer distribution facilities are eager to deliver the robust selection of tasty options being created by innovative brewers to consumers in Missouri and across the country.

**Brian Geinzer • Springfield, Mo.**
*Vice president, Premium Beverage Sales*

**Jeff Schrag • Springfield, Mo.**
*Founder, Mother’s Brewing*
In today’s digital age, establishing a presence in online media can reap a large return on investment and offer your company a chance to communicate more directly with your customers and interested parties. Brewers, retailers, and consumers in your neighborhood are discussing the beer business on a daily basis, and it’s important to be aware of what is being said about your business and brand online.

In addition to maintaining an up-to-date website, establishing a company Facebook page and/or Twitter account requires strategy and ongoing maintenance that is essential to a successful online presence. Before creating accounts on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, designate someone in-house to update and monitor the pages regularly.

Wondering where to begin? Here are the basics:

- Appoint a responsible manager to maintain online communications.
- Have ownership of your company’s online properties.
- Monitor social media.
- Pinpoint your audiences.
- Give a narrative, make it personal.
- Err on the side of caution.
- Follow all applicable laws.

The key to social media is being social. Anyone can create an account and post links to their website, but the true value comes in monitoring the conversation, interacting with target audiences, and building relationships with the same people who are talking about your business in your local communities – brewers, retailers, and consumers in your neighborhood.

For a reference on responsible marketing and communications, review the NBWA Marketing and Communications code at http://nbwa.org. Follow updates from NBWA on Twitter @NBWABeer and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NBWABeer.
Once you have developed a relationship with local reporters and beer bloggers and perhaps received some coverage, it is important to keep your company engaged with the media and local blogs over the long term. Educate the media on company milestones via personal outreach and press releases, and connect with the local business reporter to discuss the economic impact of the beer distribution industry in your community. Take your efforts a step further by inviting the local radio station to host an event at your warehouse or have the local TV station ride along on a distribution route. Continue to reach out to new reporters in the area and look for community events or news where distributors are participating or could be impacted. And don’t forget to keep local bloggers updated on company news and events.

While media coverage helps build awareness of the hard work your team accomplishes each day within your community, directly reaching out to public officials and community leaders remains important. If you haven’t already, invite your federal and state representatives, state attorney general, alcohol regulator and others to take a tour of your warehouse. Let those individuals meet your team and see what a major role you play in your local economy. If they are unable to schedule a visit, send them media coverage you receive as an “FYI.” Public officials are always looking to better understand the business community in their area, so arm them with information about your company and offer yourself as a resource.

Also consider teaming with fellow distributors within your state to offer statewide representatives an education on the beer distribution industry and the role you play in your community.

Op-ed – An op-ed (or opinion-editorial) piece is a piece in the opinion section of the paper that takes a specific position on a current issue in the news. An op-ed signed by an executive highlights your organization’s position on an issue and ensures your voice is heard in the discussion. Contact each paper for submission guidelines, as the length varies for each publication. They typically range between 450-600 words. Visit www.theopedproject.org to quickly find submission information for the top 100 daily newspapers.

Letter to the editor – Written in response to a specific published article, a letter to the editor is designed to express your organization’s contrarian view on an issue or clarify a point. Like op-ed pieces, each paper will provide specific submission guidelines. It is safe to assume a letter to the editor should be between 175-250 words.

Bylined article – Magazines, particularly trade journals, present opportunities for industry executives to pen articles on subjects affecting their industries. They must be written carefully, however, as not to appear as an advertisement. Most of these cover a general issue and feature multiple companies.

News/Press conference – Organizations host news conferences when they have major news to announce. The decision to host such an event must be made carefully, as the last thing you want is to call a news conference and have either few journalists show up, or have a roomful of journalists with no host.

Background session – In order to strengthen your working rapport with one or more key journalists, periodically meet with them on a background basis. In such situations there are no specific storylines being discussed – at least at the beginning – but they provide an opportunity to discuss industry issues and related news. Assume you are always on-the-record during these meetings.

Prepared statement – If you anticipate media inquiries related to your organization or an industry development, but it does not make sense to distribute a news release, a prepared statement used by company executives and spokespersons can be an effective tool.

Satellite media tour – Allows your spokesperson to conduct two-way television interviews with local and national outlets coast-to-coast, and around the world. The spokesperson is situated in a television studio and interviews are up-linked via satellite (they can be either live or taped). He or she simply looks into a camera and interview questions are fed to him or her via an IFB (earpiece).

Armchair radio tour – Radio also presents great opportunities to spread your views on timely topics. Armchair radio tour interviews are typically 2-3 minutes in length and are conveniently conducted from your own desk over the telephone. Local, state and network radio outlets are targeted. The interviews can be live or live-to-tape to be aired at a later date. Opportunities for longer interviews sometimes emerge, as do chances to participate in call-in segments with the listening audience. Preparation is key.

Audio news release (ANR) – Allows your spokesperson to record a series of radio sound bites for distribution to local and national outlets coast-to-coast and around the world. ANRs can be distributed to radio stations and networks via telephone, email and the Internet (MP3 format, for example).

Online chat room/blog – The Internet is a very powerful tool. Online chat rooms and blogs have emerged to disseminate organizational messages and build an interactive rapport with key audiences. Corporate guidelines for using these online tools are evolving.

Podcast – This is a term that derives from the Apple iPod™. While the initial application for this medium was independent music and talk shows for the iPod, podcast shows are now being used to inexpensively syndicate audio (and video) content. Podcast listeners frequently make use of RSS technology to automatically download new content for listening at the user’s convenience. Not just for iPods, podcasts also can be accessed by any computer or portable digital audio device.

Hyper-local outlets – With the increased emphasis on online news, a network of websites and blogs such as Patch have emerged to deliver news coverage of communities and neighborhoods across the United States.
New Partnership with Epic Brewing

June 12, 2014 (Dallas, TX) - Andrews Distributing Company is thrilled to announce a new partnership with Epic Brewing Company.

Epic Brewing Company was founded in Salt Lake City, Utah in 2010, after legislative changes allowed founders David Cole and Peter Erickson to pursue their longtime dream of opening a microbrewery. David and Peter teamed up with Kevin Crompton, a Brewmaster with more than 20 years of brewing experience to open Epic Brewing Company. Together, this team of three shared a passion for making fine ales and lagers. After just a few months of small batch production, Epic Brewing received several awards for its beers in domestic and international competitions.

Three years later, the Epic team expanded its brewery operations into Colorado with a second brewery that was built to meet growing demand. The new Denver brewery offered enough space to support efforts to grow national distribution, expansion of the brewery’s popular barrel aged beer program and the introduction of a sour beer line.

Texas is the 15th state to distribute the Epic portfolio.

Despite the rapid expansion of Epic Brewing, the company has stayed wholly committed to brewing small batch, artisanal beer. Every batch produced for the popular Elevated and Exponential series is numbered and stamped with release information that is published online.

Epic Brewing Company currently produces over 39 beers, and they have developed a portfolio that is intended to offer a beer for every person and every occasion. Andrews Distributing is looking forward to creating great beer experiences by partnering with Epic Brewing Company and expanding distribution of this award winning portfolio to our Texas beer market. Distribution of the Epic Brewing portfolio to the DFW market will begin in mid-August.

Please direct any questions to Bob Sullivan, VP of Craft Beer Brand Building.

For more information about Epic Brewing Company, please visit their website http://www.epicbrewing.com.

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ABDI Members continue to play an ever increasing economic role to Illinois’ economy by providing thousands of jobs with good benefits. They collect and pay $63 million each year in excise taxes to the state and pay more than $280 million in direct wages and health care benefits. More information on ABDI is available at www.abdi.org.

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Celebrating 125 years of Great Beer

(LINCOLNWOOD, IL; October 14, 2013)— Founded in 1888 by Louis Glunz I in Chicago, Louis Glunz Beer, Inc. is among the oldest beer distributors in the United States and this year marks the family-run company’s 125th year of business. President Jack Glunz celebrated the milestone Saturday, Oct. 5 at the Rosemont Convention Center with a private event for family, staff, and its brewery, restaurant, and retailer partners (photos available upon request). The family celebrates an award-winning year with recognitions from the National Beer Wholesalers Association, Beverage Industry magazine, and the Loyola University Family Business Center.

“So far, our 125th year has been a wonderful celebration of our continued success,” says President Jack Glunz, grandson of the founder. “It’s been an honor to distribute beer to the Chicagoland area for so long, and we look forward to continuing to do so for many more years.”

Founded in 1888 by Louis Glunz I in Chicago, Louis Glunz Beer, Inc. (7100 N. Capitol Drive, Lincolnwood, IL 60712; 847.676.9500) is among the oldest beer distributors in the United States, proudly offering Chicagoland the most comprehensive selection of craft, specialty, and import beers representing more than 190 breweries around the globe. The 125-year-old company continually receives recognition for its innovative, family-owned business, including Beverage Industry’s 2013 Wholesaler of the Year, the National Beer Wholesalers Association 2013 Public Affairs Award, a 2013 Loyola Illinois Family Business of the Year Award, and 2012 Distributor of the Year by Beverage World. Heading the company is President Jack Glunz, the grandson of the founder, with day-to-day operations led by five of his seven children as members of the fourth generation and with members of the fifth generation also on staff. Louis Glunz Beer, Inc. is dedicated to quality service and beer education. For product descriptions, food pairings, and a list of local retailers through a “Find it near me” ZIP code search, visit www.glunzbeers.com.

Find Louis Glunz Beer, Inc. on Facebook.

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EXCLUSIVE SWVA DISTRIBUTOR FOR THE DAMASCUS BREWERY

04.15.2014

Walling Distributing Company is excited to announce their appointment as the exclusive SW Virginia distributor for The Damascus Brewery. Located in beautiful Damascus, Virginia in the Blue Ridge Mountains, Damascus is a popular tourist town and is situated on the Appalachian Trail.

Adam Woodson, owner and Brewmaster, stated that he chose Walling Distributing for several reasons but primarily because Brian Anderson, Walling’s Sales Manager, assured him that his team could successfully introduce Adam’s high quality beers to local restaurants. He knew of Walling’s history and that since Walling had been with Budweiser for 50 years they could make it happen.

There are currently 22 different brews and ciders. Adam says one of his best selling products, which is seasonal, is his Woodson Cider. His personal favorites are Beaver Rage and the Creeper. Brian and Adam agree on most everything, but Brian prefers the Reason Irish Stout.

When asked how he got started brewing beer, Adam said while attending Radford University he began making home brews as a hobby. As it turned out, his friends enjoyed his beers and he began to wonder if he could make a living doing what makes him happy.

When Adam is not in the brewery he enjoys spending time with his wife and 2 children. Adam is an avid rock climber and kayaker. He is very active in his church and says you may even find him singing in the choir.

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Luke Washburn and Jedidiah Scott Named Winners of Frank J. Gaziano Memorial Lineman Awards
$14,000 in scholarships awarded by National Distributors, Inc., largest high school football scholarship of its kind in the country

SOUTH PORTLAND, Maine - Today Jeff Kane, President of National Distributors, Inc. and Frank J. Gaziano’s son-in-law, announced the winners of the Frank J. Gaziano Memorial Offensive and Defensive Lineman Awards during a luncheon ceremony at the Augusta Civic Center. Jedidiah Scott of Sanford High School and Luke Washburn of Oak Hill High School were named the top senior football offensive and defensive linemen in the state based on their hard work on the field, in the classroom, and in their communities. The two winners received a trophy and a scholarship of $5,000, the largest high school football scholarship of its kind in the country.

The runners-up for the Gaziano Awards were offensive linemen Greg Grinnell from Cheverus High School and Ethan Liberty from Skowhegan Area High School, and defensive linemen Jacob Fogel of Portland High School and Colin Richards of Mt. Blue High School. Each runner-up received a $1,000 scholarship and a trophy, and all six finalists received a leather jacket with the Gaziano Awards logo.

“This is always such a meaningful day for our company because of the legacy that Frank left behind. I know he would be proud of not just the winners today, but all of the great student athletes that were nominated. Our company is proud to continue this tradition and help these young men with future opportunities that are in front of them in both football and in life,” said Kane.

The scholarship and awards program for Maine senior high school football linemen was created in memory of Frank J. Gaziano, founder of National Distributors and a former college All American and professional football player with a lifelong passion for local sports. Funding for the $14,000 in scholarships is provided by National Distributors in South Portland, the company founded by the late Gaziano.

The list of finalists considered for the annual Frank J. Gaziano Memorial Offensive and Defensive Lineman Awards epitomize the character, leadership, and perseverance of Gaziano. The top recipients were selected by the awards committee based on their strong leadership on the field, in the classroom, and in the community.

All eligible applicants must have been a high school senior in 2013, competed at the varsity level for a minimum of two years and have an exemplary record of positive athletic and non-athletic citizenship. As part of the selection process, the students submitted an essay and game film featuring each lineman against his toughest competition.

Applicants from all levels of Maine’s high school football three-class system were eligible for the scholarship and able to be nominated by their coaches. For more information on the scholarship program application process, or to contribute to the scholarship fund, visit www.gazianolinemanawards.org or contact Charlie Gagnon at gazianoawards@gmail.com.

# # #

High Country Beverage Presents Donation to St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital

LOVELAND, Colo. – January 14, 2014 – High Country Beverage, a locally owned and operated beer distributor, is honoring their long-term commitment to helping children with cancer with a donation to the St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.

High Country Beverage presented a check for $46,000 to the hospital on Jan. 13.

The funds will be used towards research and treatment at St. Jude Children’s Hospital. “St. Jude proving the way en treating and beating pediatric cancer,” said Steve Nicos, President of High Country Beverage. “We’re proud to support St. Jude and their innovative cancer research and saving children’s lives.”

St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital is internationally recognized for its pioneering research and treatment of children with cancer and other catastrophic diseases. It is ranked one of the best pediatric cancer hospitals in the country.

High Country Beverage has been helping St. Jude make a difference in children’s lives for over 15 years. They have raised over $330,000 for St. Jude Children’s Hospital just since 2004!

“We are truly honored to have a wonderful partner like High Country Beverage, who not only continues to raise more money each year for the kids of St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital, but who also is helping to provide integral awareness into the lifesaving work being done at St. Jude,” said Jaymie Hardfarer, event marketing representative for St. Jude Children’s Hospital. “The team at High Country Beverage continues to go above and beyond in their partnership with us, inviting us into their family.”

About High Country Beverage:

High Country Beverage is an independent Colorado family owned and operated beer distributor known for product quality and outstanding customer service. They proudly represent over 250 brands of the finest local, craft, domestic and imported malt beverages from around the world. For more information about High Country Beverage, please call 1-800-462-5615, or visit us online at www.higcountrybeverage.com.

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Catching on,” he said. “And I stepped out company disregarded a growing industry. Lombardi, a former product manager for customer and the brewer, they don’t have many ‘What that means is that for both the cus - tomers don’t have the brand loyalty the way ‘I saw it with my own eyes. They wanted local beers, craft beers. Young beer-drink- ers don’t have the brand loyalty the way they their parents did. If they find a beer, they don’t mean they’d be drinking it the rest of their lives.” The two joined forces and now have 75 re-tail accounts, such as Crafty Pint, the Daily Growler, House Beer and Crafted Drafts. May said basically what happens is that craft brewers start out small. As they build their inventory, they also have to market it and deliver. If business grows, craft brewers then have two options: hire staff and more trucks or hire a distributor. “The experience of self-distribution cer - tainly takes a toll on business and it takes a ‘We’re not going to recruit beers just to have them,” he said. Mary Martineau, executive director of the Ohio Craft Brewers Association, said 17th Star definitely fills a void for small beer produ-cers, which total about a dozen locally. “I think it depends on your business plan and your operation,” she said. “I like the 17th Star guys. I like that they’re focusing on craft beers. There’s certainly a need for it.” Fred Lee, who founded Actual Brewing with his wife, Mira, said 17th Star will give a voice to small breweries that don’t have the staff to constantly pitch to bars and res-taurants. “It’s a big deal,” said Lee, who has hired 17th Star as a distributor. “There’s a rule of thumb that you should have your dis-tributor be as big as your brewery. That’s because you have to know the same things about the beer, you have to know the same customers.” For more information, call 614-527-7610.

Examples of Distributor Coverage

This Week

Distributor 17th Star focuses on craft brew

By GARY SEMAN JR.
May 28, 2014

Two guys familiar with the local food and wine scene have switched their focus to the emerging world of craft beer. Patrick Lombardi, a former wine distribu-tor, has founded 17th Star Distributing Co. and brought along partner Greg May, a former partner in three local Buffalo Wild Wings franchises. Their business model calls for the repre-sentation of small microbrews, both from Columbus and beyond, and to Columbus and beyond.

They began selling in early March and now represent seven breweries -- three in Colum-bus, one in Millersburg, one in Dayton and one each in California, New Mexico and New Hampshire. “We’re now moving into Dayton and hope-fully by the end of the year, we will be mov-ing into Cincinnati,” May said. “Our plan does not include going into northern Ohio right now. We’ll see how it goes.” They’re filling a niche, given that there’s a paucity of mid-tier distributors in the area, May said. “What that means is that for both the cus-tomer and the brewer, they don’t have many options in getting their beers out there,” he said.

Lombardi, a former product manager for a small distributor, said he watched as his parents did. If they find a beer, that’s what’s going to make it. “I saw it with my own eyes. They wanted local beers, craft beers. Young beer-drink-ers don’t have the brand loyalty the way their parents did. If they find a beer, they don’t mean they’d be drinking it the rest of their lives.” The two joined forces and now have 75 re-tail accounts, such as Crafty Pint, the Daily Growler, House Beer and Crafted Drafts. May said basically what happens is that craft brewers start out small. As they build their inventory, they also have to market it and deliver. If business grows, craft brewers then have two options: hire staff and more trucks or hire a distributor. “The experience of self-distribution cer-tainly takes a toll on business and it takes a toll on them,” he said. “That’s kind of why we exist.”

They won’t accept just any beer, May said, adding he’s pleased with the quality and customer response to beers in 17th Star’s portfolio. “We’re not going to recruit beers just to have them,” he said. Mary Martineau, executive director of the Ohio Craft Brewers Association, said 17th Star definitely fills a void for small beer produ-cers, which total about a dozen locally. “I think it depends on your business plan and your operation,” she said. “I like the 17th Star guys. I like that they’re focusing on craft beers. There’s certainly a need for it.”

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For more information, call 614-527-7610.

Markstein Beverage Co. Employee Recognized in National Program

Pat Hodge Highlighted by National Beer Wholesalers Association

August 13, 2014

Oceanside CA– Local beer distributor Markstein Beverage Co. is pleased to announce its longtime employee and Oceanside resident, Pat Hodge, has been recognized in the National Beer Wholesalers Association (NBWA) Employee Spotlight Program. Hodge has worked with Markstein Beverage Co. for more than 11 years, working up the ranks from his first position as merchandiser to his current position as inside sales representative.

America’s 3,300 independent beer distribution facilities employ approximately 130,000 men and women across the country. The NBWA Employee Spotlight Program highlights outstanding beer distri-butors’ employees and their achievements.

“It is often noted that many beer distribution companies are family-owned and –operated, and many of these businesses operate as an extended ‘family,’ with employees who have worked in the business for 10, 15, 20 years and more,” said NBWA President & CEO Craig Purser. “NBWA’s Employee Spotlight Program recognizes these standout employees who are the face of the American beer industry in their communities.”

Markstein Beverage Co.’s Director of Brand Strategy Kevin Luckey nominated Hodge for the award. He commented, “Pat Hodge has become our tel-sell guru. He has more retail accounts than any sales rep in the company – yet, somehow, he maintains a personal relationship with each one of them.”

“His customers rave about his positive attitude and kind-hearted nature,” Luckey added. “As a resident of Oceanside, he cares deeply about North San Diego County and is involved in supporting local charities. We’re so thankful to have Pat on our team.”

Markstein Beverage Co. is your locally owned and independently operated beer distributor, bringing fresh beer to California’s local bars, restaurants, and grocery stores since 1919. Today, the company markets over 200 brands of beer, from light American lagers and Mexican imports to barrel-aged stouts and Belgian ales. As an San Marcos distribution center, you will find 390 local beer experts, including draught service technicians, merchandisers, sales people, and delivery drivers, working around the clock to ensure a diverse selection of quality beer is available throughout North County.

marksteinbeer.com

The National Beer Wholesalers Association (NBWA) represents the interests of America’s 3,300 licensed, independent beer distributor operations in every state, congressional district and media market across the country. Beer distributors are committed to ensuring alcohol is provided safely and respon-sibly to consumers of legal drinking age through the three-tier, state-based system of alcohol regulation and distribution. To learn more about America’s beer distributors, visit www.AmericasBeerDistributors.com.
Champion Brands and Trillium CNG break ground on new fueling station

By Jensen Werley
July 30, 2014

Jacksonville is one step closer to having its first public access CNG station, with the groundbreaking ceremony held today by Champion Brands and Trillium CNG.

The groundbreaking launched the start of the installation project by Trillium, which plans to have the compressed natural gas fueling station fully operational by October.

“This is an example of how these types of stations are a catalyst for other fleets to convert,” said Jeff Sheffield, executive director of the North Florida Transportation Planning Organization, who attended the event.

Speakers praised Champion Brands CEO Earl Benton for his decision to make the fueling station open to public use. Because of its public access, smaller companies will have more incentive to convert their fleets to natural gas — which is cheaper and cleaner burning than diesel — without the overhead of having to install their own fueling station.

“His foresight to make it available to the public is huge,” Sheffield told the Business Journal.

Because of its proximity to the port, railroads and highway infrastructure, Jacksonville was an ideal location to install CNG fueling stations.

“We are a recognized transportation hub,” said Alan Mosley, vice president of transportation, energy and logistics for Jax Chamber. “We are poised to be a global force in international trade.”

Mosley called this step toward natural gas-powered energy a “watershed moment.”

The station is the start of several natural gas projects in the works, including a fueling station in St. Johns County and liquefied natural gas ships for Crowley and Sea Star at the port.

Andrijk Frazier, regional development manager for Trillium CNG, said this was the first of several stations in the area.

“This is about energy, the environment and economics,” he said.

For Earl Benton, the decision gave him the most bang for his buck.

“I’m a capitalist,” he said. “If it didn’t make green sense, it didn’t make any sense.”

Dichello says party safe on St. Patrick’s Day

By Tony Lota, Dichello Distributors, Inc.
February 24, 2014

To the Editor:

Millions of adults will celebrate St. Patrick’s Day this year with parties and parades. But it takes more than the luck of the Irish to make sure everyone who observes the holiday gets home safely.

That’s why Dichello Distributors, Inc., the local Anheuser-Busch distributor, is working with area bars and restaurants to encourage revelers 21 and older to celebrate responsibly and designate a driver or make plans for a safe ride home.

Thanks to efforts like these and increased law enforcement, drunk-driving fatalities have declined 51 percent since 1982, according to the U.S. Department of Transportation.

We hope all residents will join us in celebrating responsibly on St. Patrick’s Day, and the weekend prior to it. After all, these are our roads and it’s our shared responsibility to keep them safe.

Tony Lota
Dichello Distributors, Inc.
High risk, high reward leads to Kramer success

By MICHAEL MILLER, Staff Writer
May 22, 2014

HAMMONTON - Kramer Beverage Co. owes its longevity as a fourth-generation beer distributor to bold decisions that have kept it competitive in South Jersey. Success often comes when a company recognizes opportunity. CEO Charles Kramer, of Ventnor, has seen moments seized and moments lost.

The company started as a soft-drink bottler and distributor, founded in 1924 by his grandfather, the late Benjamin Kramer.

“Being a small soft-drink bottler was commonplace at the time. Now they’re almost non-existent because of the economy of scale,” he said.

Kramer Beverage passed on a chance to work with Pepsi Co. in the early 1970s. Pepsi was far from a national brand name at the time - and nobody had any inkling this upstart to Coca-Cola would climb to No. 43 of the Fortune 500’s biggest companies.

“We’d probably still be in the soda business if we had taken on Pepsi-Cola,” he said.

In 1986, Kramer Beverage was faced with a choice to pursue a franchise distributorship for another upstart - Coors Brewing Co. in Golden, Colo.

Doing so would require expensive and time-consuming applications to Coors with no guarantee of winning the contract. Success would mean going heavily into debt to accommodate the surge in new customers and a wider delivery range.

“It allowed us to handle a growing number of products. We have more than 600 now,” Mark Kramer said.

“We’d probably still be in the soda business if we hadn’t moved to Egg Harbor Township, we wouldn’t have survived.”

The company moved to Hammonton in 2002 as a central hub for the six counties it serves. Daily operations are now in the hands of the fourth-generation, son Mark Kramer, of Voorhees, who is the company president.

His daughters represent the potential fifth generation. Today, Coors remains its biggest supplier. Kramer Beverage celebrates its 90th anniversary. It delivers more than 600 varieties of beers, wine coolers and ciders. This includes regional beers such as Yuengling, imports such as Corona and Guinness and a growing number of craft beers.

Craft beer is a booming segment of the domestic beer market. Sales jumped 20 percent in 2013, according to the Brewers Association, a trade group based in Boulder, Colo.

Craft brewers sold more than 15 million barrels of beer in 2013 - up from 13 million in 2012. By comparison, industry-leading Coors routinely sells more than 18 million barrels per year.

The beer business is about forming good relationships with the brewers, the merchants and their customers, Mark Kramer said.

Cultivating good customer service is extremely important, a point the company reinforces among its 140 employees through its 24-point “formula for success.”

But the company also relies heavily on technology to boost efficiency. With so many moving parts, coordination is essential, Mark Kramer said.

Kramer’s stocks inventory and loads trucks by computer so drivers ideally have to unload each pallet just once as they make their rounds. Drivers carry tablet computers to make changes and print final invoices on the road.

This automation cut down on mistakes and improved the speed of deliveries.

“People might think we’re just a middle man who adds cost to the price of beer. But we do a lot,” Mark Kramer said.

Kramer has its own promotional sign shop that makes the vinyl banners and advertisements that entice customers at bars and liquor stores. These promote special events such as the World Cup or the Super Bowl for each establishment or help introduce new products.

The company keeps the taps flowing at more than 1,000 bars and restaurants in southern New Jersey counties and fills cooler cases at 250 liquor stores.

Camden and Gloucester counties are its biggest market, but brisk summer business keeps the company’s fleet of 16 trucks busy in Atlantic and Cape May counties. The company also serves Atlantic City’s casino hotels.

Coors, the MillerCoors distributor in Glenview, purchased about $4,000 worth of food to donate to the food pantry. Food was purchased through the Jewel on Pfeiffer Road in the village. Items included 900 canned vegetables, 150 10-1/2 lb bags of potatoes, 300 cans of gravy, 75 packs of stuffing, 75 packs of white rice, 150 apple pies and 150 crocked hams.

“We were trying to be as local as possible and support our local community,” said Kevin Mullarkey, president for Joseph Mullarkey Distributors.

This food will help to provide Christmas dinners to the 720 families signed up for the pantry right now, according to Mary Lou Knotts, pantry coordinator. Other businesses have donated dinners as well. “All the meals have been donated this year,” she said.

Kevin Mullarkey, along with three other employees, picked up the food from Jewel and dropped it off at the pantry on Dec. 11.

Last year, Joseph Mullarkey Distributors donated money to Sunset Foods in Northbrook, which bought food for the Northfield Township pantry.

“We probably doubled our donations from last year,” Kevin Mullarkey said.

Joseph Mullarkey Distributors contacted Jewel in Glenview the first week of December and tell them about food that was needed. Mullarkey said it is important to help out those in need within the local community.

A lot of people look at Glenview and the North Shore and feel like there are not families in need. But there are. A lot more people are struggling in this area than people realize.”

Beer Distributor Spends $4,000 To Restock Pantry

By HEATHER HOLM
Journal & Topics Reporter
December 27, 2013

A local business recently donated 152 ham dinners to the Northfield Township Food Pantry in Glenview, to be provided to needy families this Christmas.

Joseph Mullarkey, a MillerCoors distributor in Glenview, purchased about $4,000 worth of food to donate to the food pantry. Food was purchased through the Jewel on Pfeiffer Road in the village. Items included 900 canned vegetables, 150 10-1/2 lb bags of potatoes, 300 cans of gravy, 75 packs of stuffing, 75 packs of white rice, 150 apple pies and 150 crocked hams.

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