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## Queens University looks at brewing in Hastings Co.

Posted By Submitted

Posted 3 months ago

Will Hastings County be the home of a future micro-brewery? That is a question that a research team is looking at. A team of fourth year Queen's University Commerce students this fall will be assisting Andrew Redden, Hastings County Economic Development Manager, research and develop a business case for a new micro-brewery that would later be distributed to existing entrepreneurs, local (hops) farmers as well as investors contacted through our new marketing efforts.

It fits the County's new Investment Marketing Strategy approved by County Council on August 27, a follow-up to the County's new Economic Development Action Plan. The Strategy identifies value added agri-products as providing strong economic development opportunities, especially Micro-Brewing.

To help justify this business case, preliminary research has uncovered that ingredients commonly found in beer is being grown locally, such as hops. Stirling area farmer Steve Tubb for example has been growing common beer ingredients such as hops and another farmer in the Marmora area has been doing so as well.

There is a continuing surge in interest from beer drinkers making this opportunity an excellent fit to Hastings. Furthermore, the increasing popularity to "buy-local" and the "100-mile diet" reinforces suspicions that there is a potential local ingredient theme that could be implemented. Take for example the successful new local food movement "Harvest Hastings" see [www.harvesthastings.ca](http://www.harvesthastings.ca) which is making significant strides and this new local food brand could possibly be adopted. How about "Harvest Hastings Ale" or "Logger Lager" in North Hastings?

The Ontario Craft Brewers Association says, today in Ontario, 25 member breweries brew more than 150 handcrafted, premium beers, in a wide range of traditional international styles as well as innovative, personal recipes. As they did in colonial days, Ontario's craft brewers play a key role in the local economy through their community involvement. The local economic impact of craft brewery enterprises is estimated at well over \$300 million per year in Ontario.

Unfortunately, while micro-breweries appear to be opening all across Ontario, not one has opened in Hastings County. We would like to change that.

There are several downtown commercial properties in the County's urban areas that would make for excellent tourism-oriented dining and drinking and fits with current main street revitalization efforts. One development like this can kick start urban regeneration or keep it going, and it fits perfectly with the efforts to attract Lone Eagles (as highlighted in the new County Investment Marketing Strategy) – knowledge workers with highly transportable skills.

In the U.S. the craft beer industry is also growing significantly. The Brewers Association of America indicates the following: Growth of the craft brewing industry in 2008 was 5.9 per cent by volume and 10.1 per cent by dollars; The craft brewing industry produced nearly 8.6 million barrels of craft beer in the U.S. in 2008; The fastest growing craft brewing sector continues to be microbreweries, showing customer support for local breweries; The craft brewing sales share as of December '08 is 4 per cent by volume and 6.3 per cent by dollars. Total U.S. craft brewing industry annual dollar volume is \$6.3 billion.

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