

**THE**  
**MUNICIPAL**  
**LIQUOR STORE**

Volume 69, Number 5, 2010/2011

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
MINNESOTA BEVERAGE ASSOCIATION  
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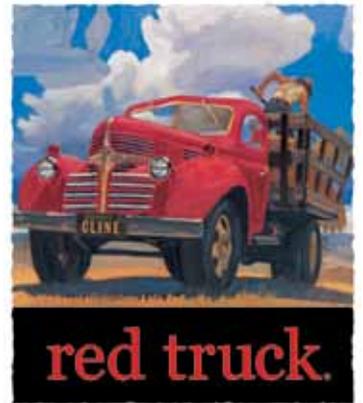
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# MUNICIPAL LIQUOR STORE

Volume 69, Number 5, 2010/2011

*Official publication of the Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association. Published six times annually: September/October, November/December, January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August. For advertising and editorial inquiry contact Paul Kaspszak, Editor, Box 32966, Fridley, MN 55432. Phone 763-572-0222 or 866-938-3925. Advertising rates available upon request. Change of address: List both old and new address.*

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## ON THE COVER

The recent MMBA / Coors Light Food Drive generated over 28 tons tons of food for local member food shelves!!!

This is up from 11.5 tons generated in 2008 and 20.5 in 2009!!

Congratulations to everyone who participated!! Your contributions, large and small, are helping an important need in all of our communities.

The overall winners of this year's contest are:

Hackensack (Under \$1 million in annual sales) & Fergus Falls (Over \$1 million in annual sales)!!!

The food shelves in these communities will be receiving a \$1,000 donation courtesy of MillerCoors and MMBA.

Each of the food shelves in these communities, chosen through a random drawing of all participants (not including the overall winners) by Paul Kaspszak's wife Jill (so honesty and integrity was ensured), will receive a \$100 donation:

Remer  
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Pictured on the cover are MMBA, Coors Light, Hackensack Liquor and Hackensack Food Shelf representatives.

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# MMBA President's Message



Tom Agnes  
President

A wise man once said, "Our life and our business is lived in cycles."

We see things come our way that our parents and grandparents may have faced over and over again.

The same goes with the business we are involved in. We may see the same things come and go over a number of years ( A "Cycle" ). So we must pay attention to the past to recognize what is happening in the present and learn from the successes and the failures. This month I would like to highlight an MMBA member city that has been down this cycle road several times. It is Rush City.

This city is located about an hour north of the Twin Cities on Hwy 35.

Back in the 60s & 70s it was a municipal liquor city that boasted of 13% and 14% net profit margins bringing \$20 to \$30 thousand dollars a year back into it's community.

Then something happened in the early 80s and they made the decision to sell their municipal liquor organization to a private party. The city administrator back then said "We decided to get out of the liquor business. The operation was losing money and we couldn't justify heavy reinvestment in the facility".

The new owners of the facility named it "Iron Skillet" and opened its doors to the public in 1978. They then promptly closed it's doors 18 months later. The city then had another decision to make with municipal liquor.

Rush City pulled it's retired liquor manager out of retirement with a plan of success. They reopened and added a 19 door beer cooler, which they boasted was the largest between the Twin Cities and Duluth. An article in the Municipal Liquor Store Magazine in 1985 was titled "Rush City Revitalizes to Live Again."

In the 80s and 90s Rush City again did well even having nice net profits in excess of \$70,000.

Then in 2002 the numbers started going south, even losing money in 2003 It was a struggle to keep the business profitable. Then a couple years ago the Rush City was again facing that question of shutting down the operation or make the changes necessary to make the business work.

They radically changed course and shut down the on-sale and moved the off-sale next to a grocery store by the freeway in 2010. They are now looking at hitting over a million dollars in sales.

Carol the current manager has been

there for 39 years even working for the Iron Skillet for a while when the city sold the liquor operation.

She said it was a tough move to the new facility after being at the old location for so long. It was like cutting off her right arm.

But with the help of a good crew they made it through this cycle.

The key was making the necessary upgrades like the website they now have that just drew in a sale for a specialty wine from 45 miles away.

I am not sure they can boast of having the largest cooler from the Twin Cities to Duluth anymore. However, they can say the cooler was upgraded with a walk in beer cave and it was a successful move.

So the question I pose to all of you who run municipal liquor operations, "When is the next cycle of sales, profit or net income coming to your city? How will you handle it? Will you be able to look at your past and say "This is the right direction?"

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# North Branch Liquor Profits Benefit the Community

By ECM Post Review

Over 60 years old and going strong, North Branch Liquors continues to pour profits back into the community. North Branch Liquors operates out of a 6,000-square-foot building located at 5846 Old Main Street.

The store features daily, weekly and monthly specials on selected beer, wine and liquor. Seniors receive a discount of 10 percent on Tuesdays, and there is a 10 percent case discount on wine and liquor every day.

On average, the liquor store transfers approximately \$113,500 annually to

the City's General Fund. In the past, this has included about \$25,000 annually to parks and \$20,000 to sidewalk replacement.

To replace this revenue, North Branch would need an additional 228 homes valued at \$100,000 occupied and paying property taxes; or, 152 homes valued at \$150,000 occupied and paying property taxes; or, the property tax levy would need to be increased by approximately 2.96 percent.

North Branch Liquors participated in the 3rd Annual Minnesota Municipal Beverage Association's Food Drive in October. That effort resulted in the

collection of food donations and cash for the local food shelf.

Twice a year, North Branch Liquors' Wine Club and the North Branch Area Chamber of Commerce co-sponsor tasting events at various locations in the City. The events feature 75 – 100 different samples of wine, beer and liquor provided by many of the store's vendors. These popular tastings are held in the spring, usually two weeks before Easter, and in the fall, usually two weeks before Thanksgiving. Next spring's event is scheduled for Thursday, April 14, 2011. Location has yet to be determined.

## Taxing Ice

At the recent MMBA Regional Meetings, members asked if sales tax should be charged for packaged ice.

According to the Minnesota Department of Revenue:

*Generally, food and food ingredients are exempt. "Food and food ingredients" mean substances, whether in liquid, concentrated, solid, frozen, dried, or dehydrated form, that are sold for ingestion or chewing by humans and are consumed for their taste or nutritional value.*

*Certain items, including ice cubes and blocks, are generally exempt. However, if any of these items are prepared by the seller, sold with eating utensils provided by the seller, or sold through vending machines, they are taxable.*

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# **Refusing Service – The Pink Elephant**

By BarOwnerTips.com

Refusing service is like the pink elephant in the room - we all know it's a necessary part of operating a bar, but nobody likes to do it. And for most bartenders, it's their least favorite part of the job.

But like most things that we don't like to do, we don't like to talk about it either...and unfortunately for lots of bartenders and managers, that leaves them not knowing how to refuse service or what to say when they cut a customer off.

Below we'll go over exactly what you can say to refuse service to a customer who's intoxicated or getting there quick.

1. When a customer is getting close to intoxication, first offer food and water.

What to say: "Leslie, you need to get something into your stomach. I'm concerned about what you've had to drink so far and you need something to

absorb it. Let me get you an order of chicken wings and fries."

2. Let the customer know when it's their last drink. Instead of cutting a customer off when they want another drink, let them know that after this one drink, you can't serve them anymore.

What to say: "Joe, enjoy this one, I don't think I can serve you another."

or

"Here you are Barbara. Drink slowly because this is the last one I can serve you safely."

3. Enlist the customer's friends - It might be easier to have one of the customer's friends explain to them why they can't and shouldn't have any more alcohol.

4. And if you must cut a customer off, be firm and come from a place of concern for the customer.

What to say: "I'm sorry Jim, we can't

serve you anymore. Can I call a taxi for you?"

or

"By my judgment you've had too much to drink Sal, so I cannot legally serve you another. Can I call a taxi for you?"

If the customer tries to argue or engage you in a conversation about why they can't have another drink, repeat that you can't serve them and ask if you can call a taxi. Do not let the customer bring you into a conversation or argument, just stay calm and repeat that line to anything they have to say.

While the customer is still in your bar, offer them food and a non-alcohol beverage.

Whenever you or your staff are going to cut a customer off, make sure you have backup. Staff should let the manager know and all other servers & bartenders should be made aware (so they don't serve the customer either.)

## **Mark Baranczyk is New MillerCoors Single Point of Contact**

Mark Baranczyk will be replacing Jon Chance as the MillerCoors contact working with the MMBA to support the MillerCoors portfolio. Jon is still with MillerCoors working with regional chains and will continue to live in MN. Mark currently works with the Tenth and Blake Beer Company, a division of MillerCoors focusing on a growing craft and import portfolio. However, Mark can work with the entire portfolio to support the MMBA.

Mark is a former Wisconsin Badger hockey goalie and is pictured at right with his fiancée Molly, who works at the Minnesota Zoo as an animal trainer.

Mark's contact information can be found on page 18.





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# Nine Ways to Turn Off Customers

By Shari Waters, About.com

As individuals, we all have our own little pet peeves. What may turn off one customer may not bother another. As retailers, we can't afford to turn off a single customer and image is everything. Keeping our stores neat and clean is not only easy to do; it is generally an inexpensive way to attract customers and create a pleasant store atmosphere.

Take a look around your retail store. Do any of the following situations exist? Here are nine ways your store may be turning off customers:

## **Dirty Bathrooms**

This customer pet peeve clearly deserves the number one spot on this list. Retail store restrooms should always be sparkling clean, whether they are open for public use or not. Make sure to stock the bathrooms with plenty of paper products, soap, trash receptacles and clean it daily.

## **Loud Music**

Playing music in a retail store can help create a certain atmosphere for our shoppers. Music that is too loud, inappropriate or of poor quality can run a positive shopping experience.

## **Handwritten Signs**

In this era of technology, there is no excuse for displaying handwritten signage. It is too simple to print a sign from our computers or use pre-printed signs. Printed signs simply look more professional and signs with hard-to-read handwriting can be a customer turn-off.

## **Stained Floor or Ceiling Tiles**

It is true, accidents happen. However, our customers don't have to see them. Dirty carpet, stained flooring and ugly ceiling tiles can turn off many shoppers. Sweeping, vacuuming and mopping

should be done on a regular basis. Consider hiring a professional cleaning crew to polish tile floors. Replace stained portions of carpet and ceiling tiles where possible.

## **Burned-out or Poor Lighting**

Replace any burned out light bulbs as soon as possible. Make sure all customer areas of the store have ample lighting and take into consideration shoppers with aging or less than perfect eyesight. Your store should be well illuminated for all customers.

## **Offensive Odors**

Customers understand if they visit a lawn and garden center they will have to deal with the smell of fertilizer. The same goes for shoppers of a feed supply store. Certain odors are understandable and may even appeal to the customer's sense of smell. However, shoppers don't want to smell an employee's lunch drifting across the store. Use neutralizers to combat any offensive odors.

## **Crowded Aisles**

Consumers like a selection but not if it means sacrificing comfort while shopping. Be sure your store is designed to allow adequate space between aisles and keep walkways free of merchandise. Cramped spaces can ruin a shopping experience and turn off a customer.

## **Disorganized Checkout Counters**

Sloppy work areas behind the checkout is a huge customer turn-off. This particular area where a customer's financial transaction is taking place should not show any signs of disorganization. Like messy dressing rooms, a disorganized checkout counter can lead to theft. Keep those register areas neat and tidy.

## **Lack of Shopping Carts/Baskets**

Your type of retail shop may not require a shopping cart or your store may be too small, but there's not a single type of retailer that wouldn't need at least some sort of shopping basket. If you hope for your customer to purchase more than one item in your store, be sure to have an adequate supply of shopping carts or baskets on hand.



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# **2011 MMBA BOOT CAMP**

Tuesday, February 22 & Wednesday, February 23, 2011  
Breezy Point Resort

*For New Municipal Liquor Managers, Assistant Managers,  
City Administrators, Council Members, and Seasoned Personnel Who Want To Brush Up On Their Knowledge*

*The Boot Camp will cover the “basics” of municipal liquor operations  
(pricing, inventory control, merchandising, promotion etc.) and includes a Wine 101 tasting dinner.*

This event is designed to provide individual facility analysis and goal setting!!!!  
All participants will leave with 12 specific items to improve facility operations!!!

## **Each attendee MUST bring:**

- Drawing of facility layout and photos to help describe configuration and general product placement. (I.E. A “top to bottom” photo of products on the shelf and in the cooler, displays, check-out area, on-sale area including general seating, bar area, pull tabs dispensing, kitchen etc., all sides of the external building and their relationship to streets and parking, storage area etc. In short, photos to help describe the facility to someone who has never been there.)
- Completion of MMBA facility financial survey (MMBA will send the form after registration is received)
- Written description of community and demographics
- Written description of council makeup and general attitudes
- Written analysis of competition

## **2011 MMBA Boot Camp Schedule of Events**

*(Subject to Change)*

### **Monday, February 21, 2011**

5 PM – 7 PM = Resort Cocktail Reception

8 PM – 10 PM = Pre-Boot Camp Event featuring Beam Global

### **Tuesday, February 22, 2011**

7 AM – Breakfast

8:00 AM – 8:45 AM (**OPTIONAL**) = Total Register System Q & A: This seminar will address common questions concerning system operations. (How to print certain reports, make accurate inventory adjustments, obtain certain data etc.) This is not a sales presentation.

9 AM – 9:30 AM = Welcome and Basics of Municipal Liquor General Session

9:40 AM – 10:10 AM = Review of Individual Facilities Breakout

10:15 AM – 10:25 AM = Shelf Set, Traffic Flow, Specials, POS, Vendor Services General Session

10:30 AM – 11:45 PM = Shelf Set, Traffic Flow, Specials, POS, Vendor Services & Setting of 3 Goals Breakouts

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM = Lunch

1:10 PM – 1:20 PM = Financial Statements, Pricing & Inventory Control General Session

1:25 PM – 2:40 PM = Financial Statements, Pricing & Inventory Control & Setting of 3 Goals Breakouts

2:50 PM – 3:00 PM = Security, Theft, Internal Controls General Session

3:05 PM – 4:20 PM = Security, Theft, Internal Controls & Setting of 3 Goals Breakouts

4:25 PM – 4:35 PM = Tuesday Review General Session

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM = Reception

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM = Wine 101 Dinner featuring Ste. Michelle Wine Estates

### **Wednesday, February 23, 2011**

7 AM = Breakfast

8:30 AM – 9:30 AM = Effective Employee Training General Session

9:30 AM – 9:40 AM = Personnel, Customer Service, Scheduling General Session

9:45 AM – 11:00 AM = Personnel, Customer Service, Scheduling & Setting of 3 Goals Breakouts

11:10 AM – 11:20 AM = Wrap Up / Home



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\_\_\_\_\_ Monday Night (February 21) Sleeping Room(s)  
*(Includes Two Beds and Tuesday Breakfast) = \$110.00*

\_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday Night (February 22) Sleeping Room(s)  
*(Includes Two Beds and Wednesday Breakfast) = \$110.00*

\_\_\_\_\_ MMBA Member Conference Fee(s)  
*(Including Tuesday Lunch & Wine 101 Tasting Dinner) = \$75.00*

\_\_\_\_\_ Non-MMBA Member Conference Fee(s)  
*(Including Tuesday Lunch & Wine 101 Tasting Dinner) = \$125.00*

\_\_\_\_\_ Spouse / Guest Wine 101 Tasting Dinner \$45.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Spouse / Guest Tuesday Lunch = \$24.00

Total Enclosed \_\_\_\_\_

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# Increasing Beer Tap Profits

With an average per keg cost of \$50.00 for a bar that uses around 15 kegs per week, this means that \$7,800.00 of the potential beer profits per year are going down the drain.

How can you reduce draft beer costs and recoup those lost profits?

Here are a few tips:

## Train your staff on proper pouring

Watch your staff and see if they could make a small adjustment that would make a huge difference to your bottom line. Though your bartenders already know how to pour beer from a tap, they may be making simple mistakes that are hurting your draft beer profits.

When serving draft beer, the beer doesn't need to run before it is poured into a glass. Bartenders should slightly tilt glasses until the glass is half full and then straighten the glass to pour the beer into the center of the glass so it forms a 1 inch head.

The beer spigot should never come in contact with the beer in the glass. Train bartenders to pay attention when pouring draft beer to reduce spillage.

## Fix problems when they arise

Is your beer too foamy? Does it have an "off" taste? Is your beer cloudy looking?

If you're having any of these problems, there is something wrong with your

beer system. It may be as simple as cleaning the lines, adjusting the temperature or checking the CO2, but you're losing money until you get it fixed.

## Control the head size

If you take the time to control the size of head for your draft beer, it can really make a difference in reducing costs. Are you currently serving beer with a ½ inch head or a variable amount depending on the bartender working?

Add more foam on each glass by as little as ½ an inch and get up to 20 more glasses for each keg in your inventory. Train your bartenders to serve 1 inch heads on every glass of draft beer that they serve.

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## Institute for Beverage Professionals – Featuring Wine 101

One of the trends in our business is the shift away from full-time employees to part-time staff.

A great number of these employees are very part-time and working the night shift. Unfortunately these individuals probably do not have high product knowledge, yet they often come into contact with customers who have the most purchasing power.

To help address this disconnect, MMBA has introduced a new on-line training course to help address this disconnect.

The Institute for Beverage Professionals (IBP) is open to full and part-time employees in all sectors of the beverage industry.

IBP's goal is to provide training that will translate into improved individual sales skills, a higher personal professionalism, and enhanced facility revenue and image.

The training includes written materials, testing and certificates of completion. IBP is designed to be a supplemental training that should be combined with instruction provided by an employer.

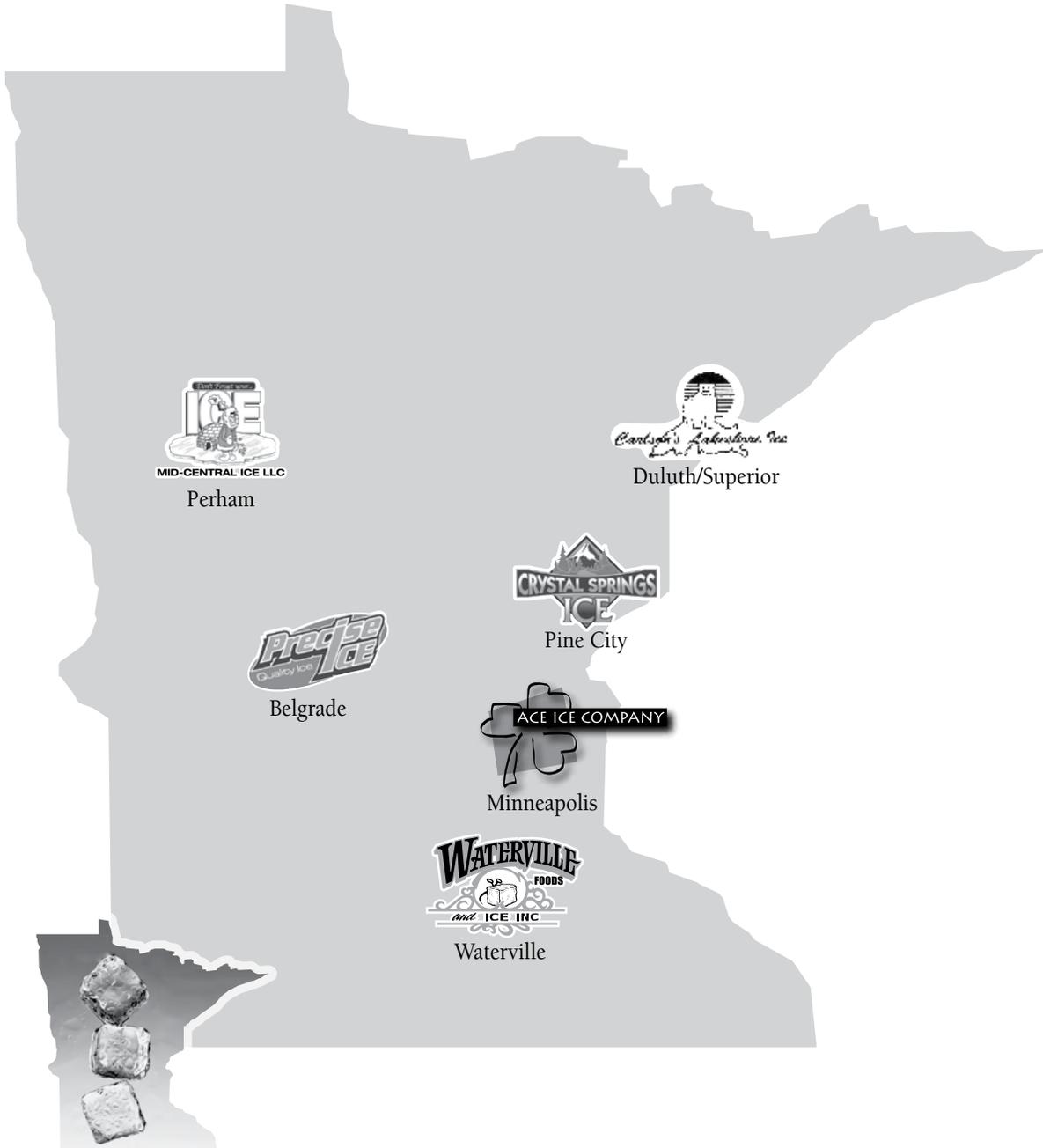
The first courses are Wine 101 and responsible beverage service. Planned future courses include beer, spirits, customer service and more.

Access the course including a free preview at [www.municipalbev.com](http://www.municipalbev.com)

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# Millennials: The Next Generation of Wine Drinkers

## Ad Age

Meghan Myszkowski was scanning the grocery wine aisle on a recent day when one bottle seemed to jump out at her. "I liked the label," the 30-year-old Los Angeles resident said, recalling her purchase of Layer Cake Primitivo. "It's really clean. It's really modern and it's not super-traditional. It doesn't have a chateau on it. It has a cake."

Ms. Myszkowski is the new wine buyer -- one of 70 million millennials whose taste for adventure, quirkiness and convenience will drive the market in the coming decade. The generation, loosely defined as those born between 1980 and 2000, is taking up wine at an earlier age than Gen X-ers and they will buy wine just about anywhere -- including the corner convenience store. And 20 million of them have yet to turn 21, meaning they will become an even more powerful force.

Yet wine marketers have only recently started zeroing in on the market, as opposed to other lifestyle brands which have been tracking the generation for many years, said one expert. "They only start paying attention to us once we turn 21, so unfortunately they are now kind of behind the curve in terms of the research they've been doing," said Leah Hennessy, 30, who runs a blog called millennier.com that focuses on wine and millennials. "Now everybody is playing catch-up."

Although beer remains the beverage of choice for millennials, accounting for 42% of their alcoholic drinks, wine captures 20% -- up from 13% for Gen Xers when they were a similar age 10 years ago, according to Nielsen. Drinkers tend to shift to spirits and wine as they get older. If that trend holds, wine will account for 26% of all alcoholic drinks consumed by all U.S. generations in 10 years, up from 24% today, while beer

will fall from 41% to 38%, according to Nielsen.

"The millennial generation offers the wine industry the kind of growth potential not seen in more than 30 years," noted the Wine Market Council in its 2009 consumer tracking study.

The last great wine boom peaked in the 1980s as baby boomers matured, but then sales slid, partly because Gen X-ers were initially hesitant to take up wine, according to the council. Sales have grown slowly but steadily since the mid-'90s. Table wine sales were up nearly 5% to \$6.1 billion in the year ending Oct. 31, according to SymphonyIRI, which does not include Walmart and liquor stores.

The test for marketers is to gain loyalty from young drinkers whose tastes are only now emerging. For some wine companies, that means putting members of the generation in charge of their brands. At Treasury Wine Estates in Napa, for instance, 26-year-old Jenna Hudson is a member of team of 20- and 30-somethings planning the national launch early next year of Sledgehammer, which is targeting the male millennial market.

Marketed as a "no-fuss" wine, the brand "eschews really traditional wine speak" like "this smells of cherries and berries and that type of thing," Ms. Hudson said. But the wine will also seek to subtly educate the new generation of wine drinkers, possibly using booklets of wine facts presented in a way that's "funny and sarcastic," she said.

Experts say millennials, as opposed to other generations, have no fear of asking for wine advice, but a lot of them seek it from Facebook friends and on Twitter -- which is leading winemakers to invest in social media.

At Jackson Family Wines, maker of Kendall-Jackson, digital projects are led by 27-year-old Adam Beough, who formerly did web work for Texas Gov. Rick Perry. His latest initiative is called "every bottle tells a story" and will encourage drinkers to submit wine-drinking stories online via various channels. "Wine's a social product," Mr. Beough said. "We need to create an opportunity for people to interact with it a little better without sounding too gimmicky."

Some companies have formed special millennial divisions, such as The Wine Group, maker of Franzia, whose Underdog Wine Merchants unit is enjoying big success with Cupcake Vineyards. The brand was the 14th-best-selling wine for the four-week period ending Oct. 31, with sales jumping 250%, according to SymphonyIRI.

Still, marketers risk overplaying their hand if they reach out too aggressively to the generation, known for its suspicion of overt selling tactics. For instance, some industry executives are noticing a backlash against trendy, edgier wine labels.

"If you order a wine that's got a dancing gorilla on it and it tastes bad, then who's stupid? You are," said Don Sebastiani Jr., CEO of Don Sebastiani & Sons, seller of Smoking Loon and other wine brands that make no concerted effort to reach millennials. "If you have a great bottle of wine that's priced right in a really classy package, you will be successful."

*Two antennae meet on the roof  
of a bar, fall in love and get  
married at the bar.*

*The ceremony wasn't so hot,  
but the reception was great!*

# **2011 Commerce Committees**

To: MMBA Membership

From: MMBA Lobbyists Joe Bagnoli and Sara Psick

The House and Senate have released the committee membership lists for all committees in the Legislature. There are many new names and new faces on all of the committees. Following is a list of the House and Senate Commerce Committees, the committees responsible for alcohol issues.

## **House Commerce & Regulatory Reform Committee**

Representative Joe Hoppe, Chair (R - 34B, Chaska. 5th Term)  
Representative Tim Sanders, Vice Chair (R – 51A, Blaine. 2nd Term)  
Representative Roger Crawford (R – 8B, Mora. New Member)  
Representative Kurt Daudt (R – 17A, Crown. New Member)  
Representative Diane Anderson (R – 38A, Eagan. New Member)  
Representative Andrea Kieffer (R – 56B, Woodbury. New Member)  
Representative Jennifer Loon (R – 42B, Eden Prairie. 2nd Term)  
Representative Pat Mazorol (R – 41B, Bloomington. New Member)  
Representative Mark Murdock (R – 10B, Ottertail. 2nd Term)  
Representative Tim O’Driscoll (R – 14A, Sartell. New Member)  
Representative Sarah Anderson (R – 43A, Plymouth. 3rd Term)  
Representative Kirk Stensrud (R – 42A, Eden Prairie. New Member)  
Representative Joe Atkins, DFL Lead (DFL – 39B, Inver Grove Heights. 5th Term)  
Representative Tom Anzelc (DFL – 3A, Balsam Township. 3rd Term)  
Representative Denise Dittrich (DFL – 47A, Champlin. 4th Term)  
Representative Sheldon Johnson (DFL – 67B, St. Paul. 6th Term)  
Representative Leon Lillie (DFL – 55A, North St. Paul. 4th Term)  
Representative Joe Mullery (DFL – 58A, Minneapolis. 8th Term)  
Representative Mike Nelson (DFL – 46A, Brooklyn Park. 5th Term)  
Representative Tom Tillberry (DFL – 51B, Fridley. 3rd Term)

## **Senate Commerce & Consumer Protection Committee**

Senator Chris Gerlach, Chair (R – 37, Apple Valley. 3rd Senate Term, 3 House Terms)  
Senator Paul Gazelka, Vice Chair (R – 12, Brainerd. 1st Senate Term, 1 House Term)  
Senator David Brown (R – 16, Becker. New Member)  
Senator Roger Chamberlain (R – 53, Lino Lakes. New Member)  
Senator Gary Dahms (R – 21, Redwood Falls. New Member)  
Senator Mike Jungbauer (R – 48, East Bethel. 3rd Term)  
Senator Ben Kruse (R – 47, Brooklyn Park. New Member)  
Senator Dave Thompson (R – 36, Lakeville. New Member)  
Senator Ray Vandevveer (R – 52, Forest Lake. 2nd Senate Term, 4 House Terms)  
Senator Linda Scheid, Lead DFL (DFL – 46, Brooklyn Park. 5th Senate Term, 6 House Terms)  
Senator Terri Bonoff (DFL – 43, Minnetonka. 3rd Term)  
Senator Sandy Pappas (DFL – 65, St. Paul. 7th Senate Term, 3 House Terms)  
Senator Roger Reinert (DFL – 7, Duluth. 1st Senate Term, 1 House Term)  
Senator Ann Rest (DFL – 45, New Hope. 4th Senate Term, 8 House Terms)  
Senator Dan Sparks (DFL – 27, Austin. 3rd Senate Term)

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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### Beam Global Spirits & Wine

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### E&J Gallo Winery

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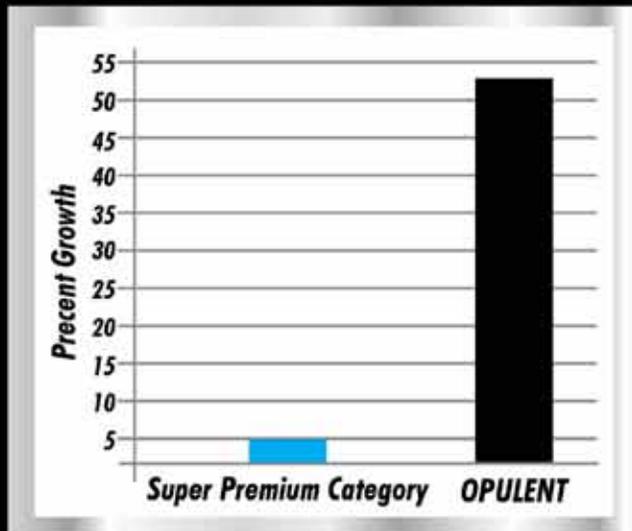
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