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Governor Evers, Lt. Governor Barnes, state leaders visit craft brewers today as part of Wisconsin Craft Brewery Day

State, local officials recognize craft breweries and #WICraftBeer for their contribution to the state's economy

MADISON, WI. SEPT. 26, 2019 – Governor Tony Evers, Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) deputy secretary Tricia Braun and other state, county, city and community officials will visit seven craft breweries across the state and Oktoberfest in La Crosse today as part of Wisconsin Craft Brewery Day, celebrating the economic impact of craft beer in Wisconsin.

“Ever since German immigrants brought a heritage of beer making to the state, brewing has remained an important industry in Wisconsin,” said Governor Tony Evers. “Therefore, it is only fitting that we visit craft breweries throughout the state to thank them for their contributions to the industry and Wisconsin’s economy. Wisconsin is home to a large and growing number of craft breweries, and Wisconsin Craft Brewery Day is meant to celebrate the successes of these businesses as well as the jobs and economic activity they create across their communities and the state.”

During the tour, Governor Evers, Lt. Governor Barnes, deputy secretary Braun and other officials will visit the companies to highlight the importance of the craft beer industry to Wisconsin’s economy and to acknowledge craft brewers’ contributions to the growing industry, especially in rural areas.

“Craft breweries offer tremendous opportunities for positive economic growth in a community,” said Tricia Braun, deputy secretary and chief operating officer of WEDC. “Along with retail activity and manufacturing and distribution possibilities, these breweries support additional sales and service growth by providing an appealing tourist destination and community gathering places to attract additional customers. The unique, family-friendly and inclusive nature of craft breweries can attract a diverse audience compared to traditional bars, making them centers of economic activity in their communities.”

Also taking part in the tour are WEDC CFO Brian Nowicki, WEDC Vice President of Business & Community Development Mary Gage, WEDC Vice President of Entrepreneurship & Innovation and Sector Strategy Development Aaron Hagar and WEDC board members Mike Kunesh and Becca Cooke. They are being joined by leaders from the brewing industry, local and regional economic development organizations and state legislators.

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The public is invited to join the Wisconsin Craft Brewery Day celebration. Specifically, to end the day, all officials and members of the public are encouraged to participate in a “Statewide Cheers” at 4:30 p.m. on social media. Participants are encouraged to post a picture of themselves hoisting a Wisconsin craft beer at their local craft brewery with the hashtag #WICraftBeer.

The companies and breweries that are part of the tour and the state officials taking part are:

- **Octopi Brewing, Waunakee:** Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes and WEDC Vice President of Business and Community Development Mary Gage
- **The Brewing Projekt, Eau Claire:** WEDC Vice President of Entrepreneurship & Innovation and Sector Strategy Development Aaron Hagar
- **Potosi Brewing Company & National Brewery Museum, Potosi:** WEDC deputy secretary and COO Tricia Braun
- **Mosinee Brewing Company, Mosinee:** WEDC CFO Brian Nowicki
- **Titletown Brewing Company, Green Bay:** WEDC board member and president of Place Perfect Realty Mike Kunesh
- **East Troy Brewery, East Troy:** WEDC Regional Economic Development Director Tina Chitwood
- **Thirsty Pagan Brewing, Superior:** WEDC Vice President of Entrepreneurship & Innovation and Sector Strategy Development Aaron Hagar
- **Oktoberfest, La Crosse:** Governor Tony Evers, WEDC deputy secretary Tricia Braun

Building on a long history of beer brewing with big names such as Miller and Pabst, Wisconsin is also a leader in the more recent trend toward craft beer consumption and production. Small, independent craft brewers across the state are meeting the demand for unique and innovative craft beer, creating increased economic value in the process. According to the Brewers Association, a national trade association for craft beer-related businesses, Wisconsin had 160 craft breweries in 2017, generating over \$2.25 billion in total economic impact.

WEDC offers a variety of grant programs to help support developments like craft breweries. Of the eight sites being visited for Craft Brewery Day, WEDC has given financial assistance to six. These awards include \$773,415 in Community Development Investment (CDI) grants, \$225,000 in Business Tax Credits, \$544,000 in Business Opportunity Loan Funds and \$500,000 in Idle Sites Redevelopment funds to help aid in the startup and expansion of these breweries.

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About the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation

The Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation (WEDC) leads economic development efforts for the state by advancing and maximizing opportunities in Wisconsin for businesses, communities and people to thrive in a globally competitive environment. Working with more than 600 regional and local partners, WEDC develops and delivers solutions representative of a highly responsive and coordinated economic development network. Visit wedc.org or follow WEDC on Twitter @WEDCNews to learn more.

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