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Speakers & Sponsors for 2017 ABL Annual Meeting to Provide Legislative and Market Analysis

January 27, 2017 – Bethesda, MD – American Beverage Licensees (ABL) announced additional speakers and sponsors for the 2017 ABL Annual Meeting, to be held March 26-28 at the Monte Carlo Resort & Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. More announcements are expected in the coming weeks that will build on a program that is already rich with unique perspectives on some of the most important issues facing beverage licensees.

“We are excited to bring our members and meeting attendees together with leaders from across the three-tier system to legislative issues, business ideas and market trends that affect their bars, taverns and package stores,” noted ABL Executive Director John Bodnovich. “Our goal is for meeting attendees to leave the meeting with more information about their industry that will help them and their businesses.”

Speakers for the 2017 ABL Annual Meeting include:

- **Vivien Azer | Managing Director & Senior Research Analyst | Cowen & Company**
Vivien Azer serves as Managing Director & Senior Research Analyst for Cowen & Company. Specializing in the beverage, tobacco and cannabis sections, Azer is the first senior Wall Street analyst to cover the emerging cannabis sector, resulting in notable press coverage across periodicals such as Barron's and Forbes. Her coverage of the tobacco sector earned her a spot on Institutional Investor's All-America Research Team on several occasions. Prior to joining Cowen & Company in 2014, she spent over nine years at Citi covering consumer staples.
- **Danny Brager | Senior Vice President – Beverage Alcohol Practice | The Nielsen Company**
Danny Brager serves as Senior Vice President – Beverage Alcohol Practice for Nielsen, where he supports relationships for the company's many clients in the beer, wine and spirits industries, as well as with key industry groups and the media. With over 15 years of experience in this role, Brager and his team provides business information, analysis and insights focused on the U.S. retail environment and consumer, as well as supports the differentiated needs of the Beverage Alcohol client base within Nielsen products/services portfolio.
- **Craig Purser | President & CEO | National Beer Wholesalers Association**
Craig Purser is President & CEO of NBWA, where he serves as a leading advocate for America's 3,300 licensed, independent beer distributors. In this role, Purser is responsible for the strategic development and tactical execution of the association's mission in the areas of government, public, industry and political affairs. He has led the charge to strengthen the three-tier system of beer distribution and state-based alcohol regulation.
- **Steve Schmidt | Senior Vice President of Public Policy & Communications | National Alcohol Beverage Control Association**
Steve Schmidt serves as Senior Vice President of Public Policy & Communications for NABCA, where he oversees the research and development of policy, best practices, and communication strategies to assist states in managing alcohol control and regulatory systems to prevent alcohol-related harm. Prior to joining NABCA, Schmidt spent 12 years serving as the Director – Bureau of Alcohol Education for the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board.
- **Craig Wolf | President & CEO | Wine & Spirits Wholesalers of America**
Craig Wolf is President & CEO of WSWA, where for 11 years he has helmed the association and serves as the voice of the wholesale wine and spirits industry, advocating for wholesalers' interests with state and federal elected

officials, the media, regulators and the law enforcement community. He is also responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the association, whose 375 member companies in 50 states and the District of Columbia distribute more than 80 percent of all wines and spirits sold at wholesale in the United States.

ABL is also excited to announce hospitality sponsors for the 2017 Annual Meeting. These companies and organizations include:

- **Brown-Forman**

Founded in 1870 by George Garvin Brown, Brown-Forman is one of the largest American-owned spirits and wine companies and among the top 10 largest global spirits companies, to sell its brands in countries around the world. With more than 25 brands in its portfolio of wine and spirits, including such recognizable labels as Jack Daniels, Woodford Reserve, Herradura, Finlandia, Korbel and Sonoma-Cutrer, Brown-Forman employs more than 4,600 people worldwide with 1,300 located in Louisville, Kentucky.

- **MillerCoors**

MillerCoors, the second-largest beer company in the U.S., is responsible for nearly 30% of beer sales in the country annually. A wholly owned subsidiary of Molson Coors, MillerCoors produces Miller Lite, Miller High Life, Miller Genuine Draft, Coors, Coors Light, Molson Canadian, Leinenkugel's, Crispin Hard Cider Company, Saint Archer Brewing Company, Hop Valley Brewing Company, Hamms and Blue Moon.

- **National Association of Beverage Importers**

Representing the interests of beer, wine and spirits importers at the state and federal levels, NABI is a national trade association whose mission is to help its importer members operate their businesses more efficiently and profitably by providing timely information, aggressive representation, and thoughtful advice on technical and political matters. NABI works on matters such as excise taxes; warning labels; responsible consumption policy and other health and safety issues; and in gaining access to foreign markets.

- **The Presidents' Forum of the Distilled Spirits Industry**

The Presidents' Forum is a group of leading companies with common interests in manufacturing, importing, and marketing distilled spirits products in the United States and around the world. The member companies represent about 55% of all distilled spirits sales in the United States. The Presidents' Forum brings its member companies together to share collective experiences and capabilities to address common issues; provides self-policing guidelines for appropriate and responsible advertising and promotion of spirits products; and works and coordinates with other beverage alcohol trade associations to ensure our perspective is heard across the industry.

ABL will also honor Tito Beveridge, Founder & Owner of Tito's Handmade Vodka, as the 2017 ABL Top Shelf Award honoree. The ABL Top Shelf Award, the highest honor presented by America's beer, wine and spirits retailers, recognizes those who have demonstrated professional excellence in the beverage alcohol industry and have had a positive influence in their community. The award will be presented at the ABL Honors Gala on March 27.

Registration for the annual meeting is currently available [online](#) for **\$299**, and includes access to all ABL events and a ***complimentary 2-Day Expo Hall pass to the Nightclub & Bar Trade Show 2017***. This pass will provide attendees with access to the expo hall on Tuesday and Wednesday, March 28-29, which will feature over 600 exhibitors presenting spirits, beer, wine and numerous other products for beverage businesses.

[Click here](#) to view 2017 ABL Annual Meeting schedule of events. For more information on ABL or the annual meeting, please visit www.ablusa.org.

American Beverage Licensees is the preeminent national trade association for beverage alcohol retailers. Direct retail beverage alcohol sales in the United States generate as many as 1.94 million well-paying jobs. ABL's thousands of on-premise and off-premise licensee members are independent and often family-owned establishments. The beverage retailing industry pays over \$25.3 billion in federal taxes and \$18.36 billion in state and local taxes. To learn more about ABL, visit www.ablusa.org.