

ABL WEEKLY

Policy, Industry & Business News for Beverage Retailers

Friday, March 1, 2019

Issue 372

MEETINGS & EVENTS

[March 15-18 - Wine & Spirits Guild Spring Meeting | Destin, FL](#)
[March 19 - TLW Annual Legislative Day | Madison, WI](#)
[March 20 - ILBA Lobby Day & Legislative Reception | Springfield, IL](#)
[March 24-26 - 2019 ABL Annual Meeting | Las Vegas, NV](#)
[March 31-April 3 - WSWA 76th Annual Convention & Exposition | Orlando, FL](#)
[April 1-4 - TLW Spring Conference & Tradeshow | Appleton, WI](#)
[April 7-10 - NBWA Legislative Conference | Washington, DC](#)
[May 5 - MBDAPA 83rd Annual Convention & Tradeshow | Pocono Manor, PA](#)
[June 3 - ILBA Annual Golf Outing | Springfield, IL](#)
[June 10-12 - Beverage Alcohol Retailers Conference | Louisville, KY](#)
[July 29-31 - ECRS Ignite 19 Retail Success Conference | Nashville, TN](#)
[September 9-11 - MTA Annual Convention & Tradeshow | Sidney, MT](#)
[September 12 - IABR Fall Golf Outing | Indianapolis, IN](#)
[September 15-17 - ILBA Annual Convention & Tradeshow | LaSalle, IL](#)
[October 10 - IABR Annual Meeting & Board of Directors Meeting | Indianapolis, IN](#)

ABL & PUBLIC POLICY News

[FDA to Hold Cannabis Meeting](#): The U.S. Food and Drug Administration will hold a public meeting next month on regulatory issues surrounding cannabidiol (CBD) products, Politico reports. FDA Commissioner Scott Gottlieb indicated that he would like to see a balance between the food and supplement channels and pharmaceutical industry research incentives. With the last year's farm bill legalizing industrial hemp, CBD products are beginning to blossom across the United States. "I understand Congress wants there to be a pathway for CBD to be available," said Gottlieb during a congressional hearing.

[To Ensure Public Health and Safety, Impose a Two-Year Moratorium on Marijuana Legalization \(Op-Ed\)](#) : Marijuana legalization is gaining momentum across the country, backed by supportive public opinion, politicians, Wall Street investors and the increasingly influential for-profit cannabis industry. By 2025, the legal U.S. marijuana market could be a roughly \$50 billion business as a cornucopia of cannabis-based products become easily available in shops and online.

[Concerns Over Plans to 'Modernize' Alcohol Labels](#): The Center for Science in the Public Interest, Consumer Federation of America, and National Consumers League have written a letter to US Treasury secretary Steve Mnuchin slating the TTB for not requiring alcoholic beverage bottles to include information about alcohol content, serving size, calories, ingredients and allergen information. The trio of groups petitioned the TTB in 2003, calling for this information to be a legal requirement on alcohol labels. The TTB issued proposed rules to require compulsory allergen labelling in 2006 and serving information in 2007 - but neither has been finalised as of yet.

[The American Mechanical Licensing Collective \(AMLC\) Isn't Going Away](#): Back in November, we first reported on a new mechanical licensing agency: the American Mechanical Licensing Collective, or AMLC. The group tossed their hat in the ring to administer mechanical licenses for the government-created Mechanical Licensing Collective, or MLC, as outlined by the now-passed Music Modernization Act. In response, major publishers and

other industry heavyweights assembled a broad consortium of industry players to back its own mechanical licensing contender.

Record-Breaking Settlement in Visa, Mastercard Antitrust Case: The U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York has announced the settlement of a lawsuit charging Visa and Mastercard, along with certain banks, with violation of antitrust laws that caused merchants to pay excessive fees for accepting credit and debit cards. Visa and Mastercard say they've done nothing wrong and the Court has not decided who is right, but the parties have agreed to a settlement.

Washington Considers Overhaul of Music-Licensing Rules: Justice Department officials and lawmakers are considering an overhaul of longstanding music-licensing rules that have pitted songwriters and publishers against the businesses, broadcasters and digital streaming services that want to play their compositions. The government's review could have major implications on the multibillion-dollar music industry. Opponents of the current system say the rules unfairly disadvantage artists and limit music publishers from striking their own licensing deals, leading to musicians earning smaller payments in the digital era.

Repeal or Replace: Two Opposing Estate Tax Proposals: Reform of the federal estate tax is incredibly popular, though there is no consensus on the direction of the desired change. In a recent survey, 50 percent of Americans supported Sen. Bernie Sanders' (I-Vt.) proposal to lower the estate tax exemption to \$3.5 million per person. In the same survey, 33 percent favored the Republican proposal to completely repeal the estate tax.

Marijuana Legalization Bills Are Advancing In Several States: Marijuana legalization advocates came into 2019 expecting it to be a huge year for cannabis, and lawmakers around the country are not disappointing them so far. This month alone, bills to legalize and regulate marijuana for adults have advanced through key committees in at least four states.

Cannabis Will Either Be 'Symbiotic Opportunity' or 'Detrimental Antagonist' in the Drinks Industry: According to the report, the drinks industry is the "most embedded" out of any consumer goods sector. A number of US drinks firms, including Constellation Brands, have already invested in cannabis startups and begun to develop products infused with the drug. UK-based Diageo has also been in talks with three different Canadian cannabis producers with a view to developing its own line of CBD-infused drinks, while Californian brewer Lagunitas, owned by Heineken, launched its own THC-laced, alcoholic "beer" last summer.

INDUSTRY News

American Beverage Licensees

[ABL Announces Final Slate of Speakers for Upcoming Annual Meeting](#)

Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB)

[TTB Newsletter - Weekly News \(March 8\)](#)

[Executive Leadership Changes in Two TTB Directorates](#)

FoodBev Media

[Navigating the Competitive Space of Low-ABV Beverages](#)

Law.com

[The Music Modernization Act Revamps Music Licensing](#)

NACS

[State Lawmakers Debate Smoking Age Limits](#)

Seven Fifty Daily

[The Evolution of Draft Cocktail Programs](#)

[6 Ways to Upsell Craft Beer at Restaurants](#)

Shanken News Daily

[PGA Tour to Begin Allowing Spirits Advertising, Sponsorships](#)

Sky Ranch Foundation

[Foundation Awards Grants to Acknowledge Alliance and Fostering Hope Foundation](#)

Wine Institute

[Institute Applauds Reintroduction of Craft Beverage Bill](#)

AFFILIATE News

Maryland State Licensed Beverage Association

[Maryland Could Begin Issuing Digital Driver's Licenses](#)

State legislation could allow the Maryland Motor Vehicle Administration to begin issuing electronic licenses. House bill 180 would begin the implementation of a Mobile Driver's License, a concept created by the American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators in conjunction with the Motor Vehicle Administration of the Netherlands.

STATE & LOCAL News

[Arkansas: Bill to Change DWI Law in State Fails in Committee](#): Legislation that would have changed Arkansas' drunken-driving law failed to clear a House committee Tuesday, after drawing support from public defenders, receiving opposition from Mothers Against Drunk Driving and creating a split among state prosecutors. The House Judiciary Committee on Tuesday had scheduled a special order of business to consider House Bill 1294. That usually signals a sharp divide in opinions. The bill, by state Rep. Jana Della Rosa, R-Rogers, aimed to give prosecutors discretion to dismiss or reduce drunken-driving charges.

[California: Lawmakers Considering Lowering Blood Alcohol Limit for Motorists](#): Lawmakers in California are considering reducing the amount of alcohol you can legally have in your system while driving. Several state lawmakers proposed a bill that would lower the legal blood alcohol limit from .08-percent to .05-percent. "Lowering the blood alcohol level to .05 will save many lives and this legislation will do that," Senator Jerry Hill said.

[Colorado: Retailers Face New Competition from Supermarkets After Change in State Law](#): Colorado's retail market is facing a new reality this year, as supermarkets and convenience stores gained the right to sell full-strength beer on January 1. Some retailers say sales are already being impacted, while others caution that it's too early for a full assessment. But there's widespread consensus that the ranks of Colorado's package store industry will diminish in the coming years. "We expect that 20%-30% of the beer market will shift to the chain channel," says Steve Findley, executive director of the Colorado Beer Distributors Association.

[Connecticut: Total Wine Loses Constitutional Challenge to State's Liquor Pricing Laws](#): The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit has unanimously upheld a lower court's ruling that Connecticut liquor laws don't constitute price-fixing. The court ruled against Total Wine & More, the country's largest retailer of wine and spirits, which argued that Connecticut's laws were tantamount to price-fixing that hurt its business in the state. It had argued against some of the state's pricing laws, such as minimum retail price provisions and the statutory prohibition on price discrimination.

[Connecticut: Modernizing Liquor Laws On-Tap for Lawmakers](#): Members of the Connecticut beer, wine and distilled spirits industry packed a public hearing room Thursday to offer their opinion on a number of bills seeking to modernize Connecticut's liquor laws. Seven years ago, Connecticut got rid of its "Blue Laws" and allowed Sunday alcohol sales, then it followed up by modifying the minimum pricing laws to allow for one item to be priced below a wholesaler-established and posted "bottle price." The pricing structure of Connecticut's liquor laws, according to those who support them, protects the 1,256 smaller package stores because it doesn't allow larger package stores to increase its customer base by lowering its prices.

Idaho: Bill to Allow State's Historic Theaters to Sell Alcohol Moves to House: Idaho's historic theaters may be able to sell alcohol if lawmakers pass a proposed bill. The measure would allow theaters built before 1950 and listed on the historic register to sell alcohol, according to bill sponsor Rep. Mat Erpelding. "Most historic theaters have historic and cultural value in their communities, and many are multi-purpose. They offer concerts, plays, and other special events," Erpelding, a Democrat serving as the House minority leader, said in a statement on Monday.

Illinois: Demand for Legal Marijuana Would Far Exceed Licensed Growers' Ability to Supply It, Study Shows: Legal recreational marijuana in Illinois could drive demand as high as 550,000 pounds a year, far more than the state's licensed growers can supply, according to a new study commissioned by state legislators. The study, performed by the Colorado consulting firm Freedman & Koski, lends support to those who argue that Illinois' fledgling marijuana industry should expand and diversify, allowing the participation of more black and Latino entrepreneurs — people whose communities have disproportionately suffered during America's war on drugs

Indiana: Small Wineries Seek to Self-Distribute Products: Small wineries in Indiana are seeking the chance to self-distribute products as the number of wine wholesalers in the state has plummeted from hundreds to several dozen. Current rules say alcohol producers can't sell products directly to retailers and restaurants but must instead use a wholesaler. But small wineries can have trouble attracting wholesalers because of their size.

Iowa: Alcoholic Beverages Division Creates New Tool to Verify IDs: The Iowa Alcoholic Beverages Division has rolled out a new smartphone app to use as a tool to verify the age of customers seeking to purchase alcohol or tobacco products. Division spokesman Jake Holmes said the app, which includes a calendar and an ID scanner, was developed after the agency stopped producing physical calendars. "In 2018, we decided not to produce those anymore because they were too costly," Holmes said.

Kansas: Stores Across Kansas Prep for Liquor Law Change Starting April 1: Starting April 1, you'll be able to buy full-strength beer at grocery or convenience stores in Kansas. With about one month before it happens, grocery stores, convenience stores and liquor stores across the state are gearing up for the big change to the way they sell alcohol. Currently in Kansas, if you want to drink beer with an alcohol content about 3.2 percent, you have to go to a liquor store to get it.

Kentucky: Distillers Upset, Left Out of Wine Delivery Bill: Those at the Kentucky Distillers' Association would probably tell you a lot of things are better with bourbon, but it's not just barbecue sauce and bourbon balls. Now, they want to see a shot of the spirit included in Senate Bill 99. Distillers said they feel left out of a bill that would allow wineries to ship online and electronic orders straight to your door. KDA leadership said current language doesn't allow bourbon producers to do the same thing.

Maryland: Officials Fight Over Who Should Enforce Alcohol Regulations: A struggle over whether to strip alcohol regulation from the Maryland comptroller's office turned ugly last week as each side accused the other of putting politics over public health and safety. In the past two years, Comptroller Peter Franchot (D) has pushed legislation that would remove caps on how much craft beer can be made and sold in local breweries. The effort did not succeed, and he angered some fellow Democrats with rhetoric accusing state lawmakers — including House Speaker Michael E. Busch (Anne Arundel) — of being under the thumb of big beer distributors.

Maryland: Business Owners Spar Over Proposal to Raise Minimum Wage: The debate over Maryland's minimum wage continued in a Senate committee hearing Thursday, with business owners mounting dueling arguments for and against a proposal that would raise the wage to \$15 statewide. Maryland's minimum wage is currently \$10.10, except in Montgomery and Prince George's counties, where it's \$12 and \$11.50, respectively. The "Fight for \$15" bill, introduced by Democrats from Baltimore and Prince George's County, would raise the state's minimum wage to \$15 by 2023.

Maryland: Comptroller Franchot's Office Files Ethics Complaint Against Sen. Kramer: A feud over who should enforce state alcohol regulations continued Monday as an aide to Maryland Comptroller Peter Franchot (D) said his office lodged an ethics complaint against state Sen. Benjamin F. Kramer (D-Montgomery). The complaint to the General Assembly's Joint Committee on Legislative -Ethics comes after each man accused the other of playing political games last week during dueling news conferences and a vitriolic Senate committee hearing.

Michigan: How Employers Should Consider Marijuana Laws in Drug, Alcohol Policies: The new Michigan law allowing the recreational use of marijuana has employers thinking about whether or not they need to change their drug and alcohol policies. On Thursday, Beacon Health System partnered with local law firm Barnes and Thornburg to provide guidance to business leaders through a seminar. Provisions in Michigan's medical and recreational marijuana laws still give employers the right to enforce zero tolerance for drugs and alcohol.

Minnesota: "Minnesotans 4 Choices" Launches Second Video of Education Campaign: Minnesotans 4 Choices, a public education campaign for Minnesotans who love craft beer, wine, and spirits, announces the release of their second video today. The videos are designed to inform and engage consumers about implications of alcohol everywhere legislation. Minnesotans 4 Choices is a group of Minnesotans from throughout the state who love their craft beer, wine diversity, and spirit assortment. We desire to preserve Minnesota's heritage of easy accessibility and unsurpassed beer, wine, and spirit selection.

New Hampshire: Bill to Legalize Sports Betting Gaining Momentum: Eight months after the U.S. Supreme Court opened the door for states to legalize sports betting, New Hampshire is taking the gamble. In his budget address earlier this month, Gov. Chris Sununu voiced his support for legislation that would make betting on sports games legal under the supervision of the state's lottery commission. The bill's leading sponsor, Rep. Timothy Lang of Sanbornton, said it was a pleasant surprise to "hear the shout-out from the governor."

North Carolina: Legislators, Health and Safety Experts Say Efforts to Privatize Liquor Sales Would Bring Irreversible Harms: Research shows that North Carolina has a liquor system that serves its citizens better than most states, and efforts to privatize liquor sales would negatively impact public health and safety and result in irreversible harms — that was the core message of a press conference held this morning at the State Legislature by Healthy Communities NC- Safeguarding Against Alcohol Harms. Members of the coalition — an informal, volunteer group committed to preventing alcohol-related problems — addressed the Program Evaluation Division's February 11 report on the Alcohol Beverage Control system, reminding those present that the PED did not recommend privatization.

North Carolina: New Legislation Filed After Report Suggests Ways to Modernize Alcohol Management: North Carolina lawmakers have filed legislation that could change the system of alcohol sale in the state, as a response to a recent report that evaluated the efficiency of the state's alcohol control system. The report was released on Feb. 11 by the General Assembly's Program Evaluation Division. It advised lawmakers of the potential effects of changing the state's alcohol beverage control system.

Oklahoma: ABLE Commission Restores Task Force: The Oklahoma Alcoholic Beverage Laws Enforcement Commission is giving a more direct focus to wholesalers, breweries and wineries. The agency is re-establishing its Trade Practice Unit, which existed years ago but went away as ABLE's budget was cut. ABLE received a \$500,000 boost in its fiscal year 2019 budget. Assistant Special Agent in Charge Greg Bynum is leading the new task force. He will travel the state to visit the 10 wine and spirits wholesalers, the breweries, and the wineries.

Pennsylvania: PLCB Looking to Grow Online Wine and Spirit Sales Through Improvements to Its e-commerce System: Starting as soon as this summer, Pennsylvanians will be able to more easily buy most wine and spirits available in the state-run liquor stores right from the convenience of their phone or computer. Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board officials discussed the ongoing \$4 million upgrades to its e-commerce sales system that will make that possible at a Senate budget hearing on Thursday. The PLCB expanded its warehouse capacity for its "e-commerce fulfillment center" from 4,500 square feet to 30,000 square feet in October, which enabled it to sell more than the niche and specialty items it formerly had available for on-line purchases.

South Carolina: Sunday Liquor Sales Bill Sent Back to Subcommittee: An effort to expand Sunday liquor sales flamed out Tuesday when a committee of S.C. House members couldn't decide whether the proposal is too extreme or doesn't go far enough. Rather than send the proposal to the full House for a vote, a divided House Judiciary Committee sent the proposal — by state Rep. Gary Clary, R-Pickens — back to the subcommittee that approved it last month.

Tennessee: State Law Prevents ABC from Running Background Checks on Bar and Nightclub Owners: Metro Police officers raided and padlocked the Ultra Lounge in Midtown on Church Street after a judge declared it a public nuisance, citing a laundry list of incidents over the last two years. Several hours later, the club's owner,

Anthony Powell, surrendered to police. Powell, we've found, has a long criminal history, but that didn't stop him from getting a liquor license. The state's Alcoholic Beverage Commission wants a judge to take away his club's liquor license, but because of a state law, they can't.

Texas: Potential Texas Bill Wants to Legalize Alcohol Deliveries with Food: A potential new bill would allow for restaurants to sell and deliver alcoholic drinks along with food. The bill would require that the drinks be served in a "sealed [...] original, single-serving container," according to the Statesman. This would apply to beer, wine, and mixed drinks, along with food orders. The bill, put forth by State Representative John Kuempel and backed by the Texas Restaurant Association, is being presented at the current Texas Legislative Session.

Texas: ASCAP Is Suing 13 Venues for Copyright Infringement: A Wichita Falls bar is one of 13 venues being sued by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers for copyright infringement. Lone Star Bar, 3600 Old Jacksboro Hwy., is one of the bars and restaurants being sued by ASCAP for unauthorized public performance of copyrighted musical works. A suit was filed Feb. 25 in the United States District Court, Northern District of Texas, Wichita Falls Division, against Abbey Amburn, Amburn Holding Limited Partnership - the owner of Lone State Bar.

Utah: Bill Allowing Higher Alcohol Beer in Grocery Stores Wins Initial Senate Approval: A bill to put higher-alcohol beer in Utah grocery and convenience stores was approved by the Senate on Monday — despite worries about underage drinking, the loss of liquor revenue and the potential that the measure is just one step away from allowing wine in retail outlets. SB132, which would hike the alcohol limit on retail beer from its current 3.2 percent by weight to 4.8 percent, passed 21-8 on a second reading. After a third reading in the Senate, possibly Tuesday, it will go to the House for consideration.

Virginia: State ABC Announces Dismissal of Lawsuit: The Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority (ABC) is pleased to announce the filing of a Joint Stipulation of Dismissal in litigation filed nearly a year ago challenging Virginia's happy hour advertising rules. The parties to the lawsuit, CG4, LLC, doing business as Chef Geoff's Tysons Corner and Geoff Tracy, and Virginia ABC filed the Joint Dismissal Feb. 22. There was no monetary settlement in this case as both parties agreed to dismiss the matter.

Washington: State May Raise Smoking Age to 21: Washington lawmakers are considering whether to raise the state's legal smoking age from 18 to 21, a law that would impact the purchase of any tobacco or vapor products, the Spokesman reports. House Bill 1074 has passed the House 66-30 despite objections from people who believe those who are old enough to vote and join the military are old enough to make their own decisions.

West Virginia: West Virginia Strikes Down Sunday Liquor Sales Ban: Beginning this weekend, West Virginians can purchase a bottle of spirits any day of the week, under a new law signed today by Governor Jim Justice repealing the state's Prohibition-era ban on Sunday liquor sales. "More and more states are rolling back these outdated Sunday sales bans to modernize their alcohol laws and increase consumer convenience," said Chris Swonger, President and CEO of the Distilled Spirits Council, the trade association for the nation's distillers that supported the legislation. "These archaic laws no longer serve a public interest, undermine business freedom and eliminate consumer choice."

BUSINESS & LIFESTYLE News

Alcohol Delivery App Drizly Is Launching a Cannabis Business: Boston-based startup Drizly Inc. plans to soon enter the cannabis e-commerce sector, as revealed in a new lawsuit that pits a Drizly co-founder who left the company in 2018 against his cousin now running the startup. The alcohol-delivery company has contacted potential commercial retail partners in the space and spoken with state regulatory officials about the concept, it said in a filing Friday in Suffolk County Superior Court. It first decided in late 2017 to enter the legalized medical and recreational cannabis market, and it expects to do so later this year, it said.

Target Adds New \$9.99 Wine, Marketed As a 'Premium' Line: If you call yourself a discount retailer, then it probably follows that you can market a \$9.99 bottle of wine as "premium." Target Corp. on Thursday announced the launch of The Collection, an assortment of five "premium California wines," which arrives in

stores March 3. The wine is sourced from the Delicato Family Vineyards, one of the nation's largest wine producers.

7 Shocking Facts About Drinking Clear Alcohol vs. Dark Alcohol: While any type of alcohol can leave you feeling intoxicated, there are some differences in the effect dark versus clear alcohol can have on the body. The various shades come about due to the ingredients used to make them, as well as the fermentation process. And it's this process that can set the two types of alcohols apart. "All distilled liquor starts out clear or light. Then as it is aged in barrels or similar, it ferments and takes on a darker appearance," Jamé Heskett, MD, medical expert at Fresh n' Lean, tells Bustle.

MillerCoors Bails on Beer Alliance After Bud Light's Corn Syrup Ads: To hear Anheuser-Busch InBev tell it, the biggest threat to beer isn't beer itself, but growing sales of other alcoholic beverages like wine and spirits. I've heard them present this argument many times in a number of contexts. For instance, a few years ago when I interviewed Felipe Szpigel, then-president of Anheuser-Busch's The High End division, he stated he missed "a willingness to work together as a beer industry in our collective battle with wine and spirits," later adding, "only together through innovation, passion and providing the best experiences can we combat the losses our category has experienced to wine and spirits."

Herbicide Used in Weed Killer Roundup Is Detected in Several Leading Beer and Wine Brands Including Coors Light, Budweiser and Beringer: Traces of a controversial weed killer have been detected in a number of the world's leading beer and wine brands, a new report claims. In a study by public-interest advocacy group US PIRG that tested five wines and 15 beers, including organic ones, the chemical glyphosate was found in all but one of the beverages sampled. Glyphosate - the most common herbicide in the world and an ingredient in the weed killer Roundup - is a probable human carcinogen, according to the International Agency for Research on Cancer, part of the World Health Organization.

Beer That Gets You High Has Arrived, and It's Just the Beginning: Inside a Denver bottling plant, Keith Villa watches as rows and rows of 10-ounce silver bottles whisk by, all filled with a golden-colored Belgian-style ale called Grainwave. It looks and tastes like beer. But instead of alcohol, there's 5 milligrams of THC mixed inside. That's the psychoactive compound in marijuana that gets you high.

8 Tips for Networking in the Drinks Industry: Many of the beverage industry's top positions never make it to formal job-search listings, but when you do spot a job opening that you're interested in, having a personal contact with the owner or hiring manager can make all the difference. "The beverage world is all about word of mouth," says Natasha David, the co-owner of the New York City cocktail bar Nitecap and the consulting firm You and Me Cocktails. "I'm pretty sure I've gotten every job I've ever had—either behind a bar, consulting, or brand work—through meeting someone or being a friend of a friend."

CBD Is Everywhere but Scientists Still Don't Know Much About It: Cannabidiol, or CBD, a nonintoxicating component of the marijuana plant, is touted as a magic bullet that eases pain, anxiety, insomnia and depression. Salves, sprays, tinctures and oils containing CBD are marketed as aphrodisiacs that boost desire; as balms for eczema, pimples and hot flashes; and even as treatments for serious diseases like diabetes and multiple sclerosis. Unlike THC, or tetrahydrocannabinol, the "psychoactive" component of the cannabis plant, CBD won't get you "high."

Budweiser Brewer Pushes Alternative Drinks as Bud Falls Flat: Anheuser-Busch InBev SA said volumes of its flagship brands Budweiser and Bud Light continued to decline in the fourth quarter, but that its efforts to woo drinkers with new lower-carbohydrate and lower-alcohol drinks had started to improve its overall performance in the U.S. The world's largest brewer has struggled in the U.S. where its key lager brands are declining amid a shift toward craft beers, Mexican imports, wine and spirits, while the company is also grappling with challenging emerging markets and a huge debt pile from its more than \$100 billion acquisition of SABMiller in 2016.

[Left Hand Brewing Signs Distribution Deal with Premier-Midwest Beverage Company](#)