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ABL WEEKLY

POLICY, INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS NEWS
FOR BEVERAGE RETAILERS

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★ ABL

- **Save the Date: 2027 ABL Annual Meeting**

Mark your calendars for the **2027 ABL Annual Meeting, April 17–19, 2027, at the Omni Louisville Hotel in Louisville, Kentucky**. ABL will bring together independent on- and off-premise beverage retailers, association leaders, industry partners and policy experts for advocacy updates, education, networking and hospitality. Additional program, registration and hotel information will be announced in the months ahead.

Let's Get Federal

- **[From Tariff to Tap: How Aluminum Costs Reach Brewers](#) – *Brewers Association***

The Brewers Association explains how Section 232 aluminum tariffs can raise packaging costs even for breweries buying U.S.-made cans. Because imported primary aluminum helps set the Midwest Premium used throughout the domestic market, tariff-driven increases can flow through can sheet, recycled material and finished cans, adding costs for brewers and ultimately affecting the beverage supply chain.

- **[Constellation Brands Announces \\$100 Million Investment to Support U.S. Farmers](#) – *Constellation Brands***

Constellation Brands announced an incremental \$100 million, five-year investment supporting barley, corn and hops growers in Idaho, Montana and North Dakota. The initiative includes additional purchases from U.S. farmers and a grower-led advisory committee focused on agricultural resilience, market access and the domestic beer supply chain.

Legal & Regulatory

- [Alcohol at the Supreme Court](#) – SCOTUSblog
SCOTUSblog reviews the Supreme Court’s long history with alcohol law as the justices consider whether to take up a challenge to the federal prohibition on home distilling. The issue has gained significance after federal appeals courts split over the constitutionality of the 19th-century ban, creating a potential vehicle for Supreme Court review.
 - [Exclusive: GOP Rep. Introduces Bill to End Ban on Home Distillation](#) – Breitbart
Rep. Diana Harshbarger (R-TN) introduced the Freedom to Home Distill Act, which would allow adults age 21 and older to produce limited quantities of distilled spirits at home for personal use without federal excise tax, while prohibiting commercial sale. The bill arrives amid conflicting appellate rulings over the federal home-distilling ban.
 - [Update to the Alcohol Advertising Policy \(August 2026\)](#) – Google
Google is updating its alcohol advertising policy effective September 30. The revised framework consolidates country-specific rules, clarifies advertiser responsibilities and permitted products, and adds requirements affecting alcohol alternatives and landing-page alcohol-by-volume disclosures. Ads for THC- or other regulated-substance beverages remain subject to Google’s separate dangerous-products policies.
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Cannabis & Hemp

- [Marijuana use up, alcohol use down: Are Americans trading one for the other?](#)
– *The National News Desk / CED Clinic*
Recent Gallup findings show marijuana smoking at a record high while the share of Americans who drink alcohol remains at a record low. Researchers caution that the two trends do not prove consumers are directly substituting one product for the other, but the divergence adds to questions about how changing cannabis use may affect beverage alcohol occasions.
 - ['More Dispensaries Than Liquor Stores': How Canada Became the World's Biggest Cannabis Market](#) – *International Business Times UK*
Canada’s legal cannabis market has surpassed California’s in monthly sales, according to government data cited by IBTimes. The report points to Canada’s wider retail availability and store density as major factors, illustrating the rapid normalization and expansion of legal cannabis retail in a market that also has a highly regulated beverage alcohol system.
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Industry

- [Heirs to the Jack Daniel’s Fortune Are Fending Off a Takeover—and a Rogue Cousin](#) – *The Wall Street Journal* (\$)

A family dispute has opened inside Brown-Forman as the company confronts weaker profits, a sharply lower stock price and an unsolicited \$15 billion takeover bid from Sazerac. Two Brown family heirs have criticized company leadership and questioned its handling of failed merger discussions with Pernod Ricard, adding pressure as Brown-Forman searches for a new CEO.

- **Morales Beverage Group Signs LOI to Acquire RNDC Indiana Assets** – *Brewbound (\$)*
Morales Beverage Group signed a letter of intent to acquire Republic National Distributing Company's Indiana assets and operations. The proposed transaction would add a sixth state to Morales' distribution footprint and represents another step in the reshaping of RNDC's former national network following its bankruptcy.
 - **Pernod Ricard Bets on RTDs, Smaller Formats as U.S. Sales Fall 14%** – *Brewbound (\$)*
Pernod Ricard reported organic U.S. sales down 14 percent in fiscal 2026 and is looking to ready-to-drink cocktails, smaller package formats and other consumer-focused innovations for growth. The results underscore continued pressure on the U.S. spirits market and the importance of lower-outlay and convenience-oriented formats.
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Business & Market Watch

- **Menu Transformation: Beverages Move from Add-Ons to Restaurant Growth Drivers** – *National Restaurant Association*
The National Restaurant Association's 2026 Beverage Trends report finds drinks are becoming a more important traffic and sales driver for restaurants. Beverage-only purchases are especially common among younger consumers, while full-service operators report expanding cocktails, alcohol-free cocktails, beer, wine and non-alcohol beer offerings.
- **Beer Leading Consistent Declines Thru Mid-August, per NIQ Weekly Scans** – *Brewbound (\$)*
NIQ-tracked off-premise beverage alcohol trends remained soft through mid-August, with beer continuing to lead year-over-year declines. The latest data reinforce the difficult close to the summer selling season even as some individual brands and segments continue to outperform the broader market.
- **Early August Read Suggests Consumer Sentiment Slipping, Financial Strain Increasing, per Circana** – *Brewbound (\$)*
Circana's preliminary August data show consumer sentiment falling again after improving in July, with particularly large declines among older and lower-income consumers. The firm says spending has remained resilient but financial flexibility is narrowing, an important backdrop for beverage alcohol as consumers continue scrutinizing discretionary purchases.

🍷 Associate Member Spotlight



Beer Institute

The Beer Institute is the national trade association representing the American brewing industry, including large and small brewers, beer importers and industry suppliers. Founded in 1862 as the U.S. Brewers Association and reorganized as the Beer Institute in 1986, the organization advocates before Congress, state legislatures and public forums and promotes sound public policy and responsibility. The U.S. beer industry includes 7,228 brewers and supports 2.42 million American jobs. [Visit Beer Institute »](#)

🏛️ States

- [Top 100 Retailer: Liquor World](#) – *Beverage Information Group*
Fayetteville, Arkansas-based Liquor World was named one of Beverage Dynamics' 2026 Top 100 Retailers. The independent retailer, founded by Kent Starr in 1993, was recognized for customer service, broad product selection, special-event planning and extensive involvement with local charities and community organizations.
- [Minneapolis City Council approves new dress code ordinance for bars, restaurants](#) – *FOX 9*
The Minneapolis City Council unanimously approved an ordinance requiring liquor-serving establishments with dress codes to clearly display those rules at or near their entrances. The measure is intended to increase transparency and address concerns about discriminatory enforcement of nightclub and restaurant dress policies.
- [Texas breweries face slowdown](#) – *Axios Austin*
The number of Texas breweries declined from 440 in 2024 to 420 in 2025 as new openings slowed and operating costs increased. Industry leaders point to higher interest rates, real estate and ingredient costs, changing drinking habits and more cautious lending as pressures on the once-fast-growing craft brewing sector.
- [Why Oregon vowed to outstrip federal requirements](#) – *The Drinks Business*
Oregon wine leaders say the state's stricter varietal and appellation standards are intended to reinforce trust, distinctiveness and premium positioning. Oregon generally requires a higher share of the named grape variety and a higher percentage of grapes from the stated Oregon appellation than federal minimum standards.

ABL Member Benefit



ServSafe Alcohol

ABL members have access to preferred pricing on ServSafe Alcohol training through the National Restaurant Association. ServSafe Alcohol provides responsible alcohol service training for bartenders, servers, managers and other staff who sell or serve beverage alcohol, helping employees recognize signs of intoxication, check identification, manage difficult situations and support safe, responsible service practices. [Learn more »](#)

International

- [Treasury Launches Business Rates Review for Pubs and Hotels](#) – *Caterer Licensee Hotelier News*
The U.K. Treasury launched an independent review of the way business rates are calculated for pubs and hotels. Hospitality groups welcomed the examination of the valuation system but said immediate tax relief is still needed as operators face rising labor, energy and other operating costs.
 - [New home-grown brands eye bigger share of India's \\$50 billion alcobev market](#) – *The New Indian Express*
A growing group of Indian-owned beverage alcohol companies is expanding across craft beer, gin, vodka, rum and premium spirits in a market estimated at \$50–60 billion. Global companies still dominate high-volume categories, but rising incomes, premiumization and new investment are creating opportunities for domestic brands.
 - [S. Korea's alcoholic beverage output falls to 27-year low in 2025 amid shifting drinking trends](#) – *Yonhap*
South Korea's alcoholic beverage production fell below 3 million kiloliters in 2025 for the first time in 27 years. Beer, soju and traditional rice-liquor shipments have declined amid changing social habits, population aging and greater health consciousness, while producers are introducing more low- and non-alcohol products.
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Back Bar

- [Canned whisky is here... but is it any good? These are the tins worth buying](#) – *The Telegraph via AOL*
Whisky producers are experimenting with 100ml aluminum cans of straight whisky, extending the portability trend beyond canned cocktails and highballs.

The format is aimed in part at younger and more occasion-driven consumers who may want smaller quantities and packaging suited to festivals, picnics and travel.

- [The unspoken rules of BYOB are falling apart at American parties, gatherings and cookouts](#) – *Food Drink Life*

Changing drinking habits are complicating the once-simple BYOB invitation as guests increasingly arrive with alcohol-free beer, botanical drinks, hop waters and other alternatives alongside traditional beverage alcohol. The article looks at how moderation and greater beverage choice are reshaping social hosting and drinking occasions.

Calendar

- September 17-18** WSWA Women's Leadership Conference – Washington, DC
- September 20-22** Illinois Licensed Beverage Association Convention & Trade Show – Springfield, IL
- September 21-23** Montana Tavern Association Annual Trade Show & Convention – Anaconda, MT
- September 28-29** WSWA Annual Membership Forum – Chicago, IL
- October 4-8** Tavern League of Wisconsin Fall Convention & Trade Show – Wisconsin Dells, WI
- October 4-8** Wine & Spirits Guild of America Meeting – Willamette Valley, OR
- October 8** 43rd Annual Market Watch Leaders Awards Banquet – New York, NY
- October 11-13** ABL Fall Board of Directors Meeting – Orlando, FL
- October 11-14** NBWA 89th Annual Convention & Product Showcase – Orlando, FL
- October 13** New York State Liquor Store Association Holiday Trade Show – Albany, NY
- October 13-14** BREW & Alliance for Women in Beer: Making Moves – Orlando, FL
- October 15** New York State Liquor Store Association Holiday Trade Show – Buffalo, NY
- October 19-20** Distilled Spirits Council of the U.S. Legislative & Board Meeting – Washington, DC
- October 19-20** Tennessee Wine & Spirits Retailers Association Annual Conference – Nashville, TN

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| October 26 | Metropolitan Package Store Association Annual Dinner – Howard Beach, NY |
| October 28 | New Jersey Liquor Stores Association Trade Show – Edison, NJ |
| November 2 | The Retailers Alliance Foundation of New York 56th Annual Dinner Dance – Chelsea Piers, NY |
| November 9-11 | NBWA 13th Annual Next Generation Leadership Conference – San Diego, CA |
| April 17-19, 2027 | 2027 ABL Annual Meeting – Omni Louisville Hotel – Louisville, KY |
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About ABL

American Beverage Licensees is the preeminent national trade association for independent beer, wine, and spirits retailers. ABL represents the interests of package stores, taverns, bars, restaurants, and other licensed beverage alcohol retailers before Congress, federal agencies, industry partners, and the public. ABL works to protect a responsible, competitive, and effective beverage alcohol marketplace rooted in the three-tier system, state-based regulation, and independent retail entrepreneurship. To learn more about ABL, visit www.ablusa.org.

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