



Down to Brass Tacks

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE BRASS TACKS INITIATIVE



Erin Hutton, Owner of Giesenbrau Bier Co standing in the brewing room.

Business Spotlight: Giesenbrau Bier Co.

LOCAL BREWERY MAKES SUSTAINABLE IMPROVEMENTS.

Giesenbrau Bier Co. opened in 2017 with a mission to bring a German-style biergarten to New Prague, MN. Owner Erin Hutton studied German throughout his college career even earning a graduate fellowship allowing him to study and live in Germany. There he met his future wife, Anna Giesen. Both developed a love of German beer and the convivial atmosphere that was synonymous with the local biergartens. Disappointed by the fact that there weren't more authentic biergartens in the States, they decided to open one in Anna's hometown of New Prague.

Over the last five years, Giesenbrau has had success drawing crowds from New Prague and surrounding areas, even winning awards for their most popular beers. Now, Hutton is turning his attention towards making small changes to the business that will have substantial environmental benefits in the long run, starting with the packaging. Hutton switched from using vinyl labels on the 16-ounce cans to cans that have the information printed directly on the metal. This is an important step because vinyl labels are not only made from plastic materials, but they must be removed from the can prior to recycling. Hutton knows that some of his patrons may not be aware of this and most likely put the entire can in the recycle bin, label and all. "The printed cans are better for recycling and cheaper than using stickers," says Hutton. "It also saves time since we don't have the added step of applying a label."

Continuing with the effort to have eco-friendly packaging, the brewery also uses eco rings instead of the typical plastic rings found on six-packs. Eco rings are made from discarded plant waste, so they are compostable and biodegradable. This means less plastic waste and less chance for wildlife to be impacted by improper waste disposal.

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JOIN US!

The Brass Tacks Initiative is seeking volunteers for the following committees to help us continue our mission to support sustainable practices in the food stream through research, education, and collaboration.

Marketing

Establishing, maintaining, and growing the visibility of the BTI. Helps promote our programs, products, and services.

Development

Helps BTI achieve its mission by developing new resources and funding opportunities for the organization.

Outreach/Education

Plans and implements educational events that inform and engage communities on sustainability in the food system.

For more information visit our website www.thebrasstacks.org/volunteer or email Rachel@thebrasstacks.org

Volunteers Prepare for Summer Activities

April was Volunteer Month and Earth Month, and our amazing team of volunteers definitely delivered! We assembled 1000 activity kits that will teach families in Scott County about the importance of composting. These kits will be distributed as part of the Scott County Library- Summer Spotlight Program this June. Thank you, to everyone who helped with this project! Also, a special thank you to Innovative Waste Recycling for the use of their space!

For more information about this project and others visit our website www.thebrasstacks.org. And don't forget to [subscribe](#) to our newsletter so you never miss an update!



Volunteers assembling take-home kits in the conference room of Innovative Waste Recycling. Clockwise starting at front left-Carissa Burns, Blake Kosanda, Eric Ihlenfeld, Steve Widdicombe, Billie Norton, and Todd Fischer.

BTI Business Spotlight: Giesenbrau Bier Co.

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Additionally, byproducts of the brewing process are being saved and reused. According to Hutton, spent grain is collected into bins that a local farmer picks up from the brewery to feed to his pigs, "it still has plenty of protein and nutrients, only the sugars have been used up in the brewing process." Hutton even passes on the bags in which the grain was originally stored. "The bags cannot be recycled, and they are very dusty so it would be hard to reuse them in the brewery," says Hutton. "But the farmer takes them and reuses them giving the bags a second purpose and reducing the need for more raw materials."



Erin Hutton, Owner of Giesenbrau Bier Co. showing the plastic grain sacks. The sacks cannot be recycled so they are reused by a local farmer.

To help him continue to make sustainable improvements to the brewery, Hutton has received grants from MN Waste Wise. In 2019 he received a grant to purchase recycling bins, trashcans, and labels. Staff from Waste Wise even trained the staff of Giesenbrau on proper recycling. Although this has helped somewhat, Hutton says one of the biggest challenges to keeping his business eco-friendly is a lack of education or awareness by the public, "I have found garbage in the recycling bin, and recyclable materials in the garbage," says Hutton. "I have actually watched someone with a plastic cup in their hand look at the garbage, then at the recycle bin, and toss the recyclable cup in the garbage. I think people just get confused." To help remedy this, Hutton is looking into creating better signage and a better way to organize the bins.

Looking back, Hutton's only regret is not including funding for solar panels in the initial loan for the brewery. He advises other businesses to plan ahead and learn from that mistake, "It is much easier to get funding for them at the start because it is more difficult and expensive when you wait until the business is up and running." Now, Hutton is hopeful that Giesenbrau's recent success at the MN Brewer's Cup will raise awareness of their brand. "I'm hoping it will help us sell more beer," says Hutton, "then I can invest in solar panels or even an electric vehicle for our deliveries."

For more information about Giesenbrau Bier Co. visit their website
www.giesenbraubierco.com

Make a Contribution!

As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, BTI relies on public contributions to help us continue our mission to support sustainable practices in the food stream. Your contribution of any size helps us provide free and low-cost programs to families, small businesses, and other organizations. **Scan the code or visit www.thebrasstacks.org to make a donation today!**



About BTI

The Brass Tacks Initiative is a 501c3 nonprofit founded on a mission to support sustainability in the food stream through research, education, and collaboration.

Our name comes from the phrase "let's get down to brass tacks." The phrase means to address the most important facts of a project or problem. The fact is food waste is a problem with environmental, economic, and social impacts. We believe the only way to make an impact on food waste is to **research** best practices and new methods of recycling, **collaborate** with the companies who are generating waste to find alternatives to the landfill, and make sure that current and future leaders are equipped with the **education** needed to make sustainable impacts in their community.

For more information about BTI visit our website www.thebrasstacks.org or contact us via email at info@thebrasstacks.org.