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Demand high at Ames brewery

BY ROSS BOETTCHER • RBOETTCHER@DMREG.COM • APRIL 26, 2009[Read Comments\(1\)](#) [Recommend](#) [Print this page](#) [E-mail this article](#) [Share](#) [?](#)

Business at the Olde Main Brewing Company in Ames Business at the Olde Main Brewing Company in Ames is booming despite the sour economy.

Head brewer Jeff Irvin said beer production has doubled each year since owner Scott Griffen opened the doors on Oct. 4, 2004.

Beer is "recession-resistant," Irvin said. "It's scary how much beer we're selling."

Olde Main started bottling its beer in May and has expanded its distribution to Carroll, Cedar Rapids, Council Bluffs, Iowa City, Waterloo and Irvin's hometown of Dubuque.

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"There's definitely a sense of accomplishment in bringing our beer back home," Irvin said. "There were a lot of people along the way who didn't think this would be possible."

Griffen, who also owns the Corner Pocket and DG's Tap House in Ames, said he hopes to be in all of Iowa's 99 counties by the end of 2009.

While the brewery's success is welcomed with open arms, Griffen, Irvin and assistant brewer John Rundall are having a hard time keeping up with the demand for Olde Main's beer.

"We physically can't produce enough beer here in this facility," Irvin said.

"We haven't had to scale back our orders yet, but we can't add any more distributors until we identify where we're going to expand our production facilities."

Griffen said he is considering where he can build a larger production plant.

Regardless of how much Olde Main continues to grow, Irvin said the brewery will always call Ames home for one reason - the water.

"What makes our beer regional and specific to the area is the Ames city water," Irvin said.

"I could even give you the recipe, but what makes our beer different is the good, hard, clean water here."

Griffen said Olde Main has a goal of becoming a well-known regional brewery.

"A lot of the huge regional breweries around the country like Goose Island in Chicago have become tourist destinations," Griffen said.

"If we could achieve that status, it would be a good thing for Ames, Iowa State University and the state of Iowa."



Olde Main Brewing Company head brewer Jeff Irvin, left, and assistant brewer John Rundall says Ames city water is beneficial for the beer.

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Politics
Crime

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Ankeny
Clive
D.M. East, North
D.M. South

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Hawkeyes
Panthers

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Dining
Music

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