

## Q&A with Brett Robinson: Beer business is booming in state

Published: March 17, 2009

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Beer business is booming in state

***Q: Happy St. Patrick's Day. In the spirit of the holiday, many Oklahomans will consume some beer today. But how robust is the brewery business in Oklahoma? Isn't it a robust industry?***



**A:** That's right. According to the latest figures from the [National Beer Wholesalers Association](#), the brewing, wholesale and retail industry is responsible for 9,146 jobs in Oklahoma and approximately \$194 million in annual wages. Moreover, the industry generates more than \$55 million in state and local business and personal taxes and \$71.3 million in local and state consumption taxes.

***Q: Can you tell us about what your association does to help that cause?***

**A:** The OMBA was formed in 1938 to advocate on behalf of beer distributors, to serve as their unified voice on legislation and regulation, to assist in their business and community roles, to encourage responsible consumption and prevent underage drinking. The beer industry employs Oklahomans across the state with excellent salaries and benefits and we make significant investments in the communities we serve. In addition, Oklahoma beer distributors provide server training programs to train retail clerks to spot fake IDs.

***Q: I read on your Web site ([www.oklahomabeer.org](http://www.oklahomabeer.org)) that 2009 is the 50th anniversary of the repeal of Prohibition in our state. Tell us about that.***

**A:** Yes, 2009 does mark the 50th anniversary of the repeal of prohibition in Oklahoma, an anniversary the OMBA is celebrating all year to remind Oklahomans of the establishment of effective state-based regulation of beverage alcohol. I believe all involved in our industry would agree that since the ratification of the 21st Amendment ended Prohibition in [America](#) 76 years ago, with Oklahoma following suit in 1959, the modern system of beer distribution has efficiently provided American consumers with immense choice and variety, provided retailers with customized inventory, encouraged a competitive marketplace by giving brewers, large and small, equal access to consumers,

allowed states to regulate where and how alcohol is sold and kept American consumers safe from counterfeit alcohol.

***Q: "Mind your "P"s and "Q"s" on St. Patrick's Day. Hey, doesn't that saying come from the beer industry?"***

***A:*** Yes. The saying "Mind your Ps and Qs" comes from the time when alcoholic beverages were served/sold in pints and quarts. Thus, to mind your "P"s and "Q"s meant to be careful how much you drank. Happy St. Patrick's Day!

**PAULA BURKES, BUSINESS WRITER**