



## Environmental Stewardship Awards

# Anheuser-Busch, Columbus Brewery

In 2008, Anheuser-Busch received a Governor's Award for Outstanding Achievement in Environmental Stewardship. The award recognizes Ohio companies and organizations committed to environmental compliance and reducing pollution.

The Anheuser-Busch Columbus Brewery, with 850 employees, produces more than 10 million barrels of beer annually. Based in St. Louis, Missouri, Anheuser-Busch is the leading American brewer. The company is one of the largest theme park operators in the U.S., a major manufacturer of aluminum cans and one of the world's largest recyclers of aluminum cans. Its diverse background also includes malt production, rice milling, real estate development, turf farming, label printing and transportation services.

### Environmental Management System

Anheuser-Busch developed its Environmental, Health and Safety (EHS) Management System with four overarching goals: ensuring compliance, minimizing impact, increasing shareholder value and serving as a role model.

The EHS management system sets clear expectations for all employees to produce excellent performance results and features many elements of the ISO 14001 environmental management standard. The company continuously refines the EHS management system to address evolving regulations and technological advancements; to provide the most current guidance to employees throughout the organization; and to respond to changing business conditions. This systemic approach insures incorporation of all aspects of environmental, health and safety programs in the company's day-to-day business operation. The implementation of the management system at the Columbus Brewery is tracked through a database that generates task lists and associated completion data. The results are reported to the company's corporate headquarters.

### Commitment to Environmental Stewardship

Recycling initiatives at Anheuser-Busch date back to the 1800's, when the company began re-using the grains from the brewing process as cattle feed. Since that time, several recycling programs have been launched to conserve resources and reduce the environmental impact of the business. In the 1950's, through a partnership with Keep America Beautiful, Anheuser-Busch helped to launch the "Pitch-In" campaign. In 1978, the Anheuser-Busch Recycling Corporation (AB-R) was formed. AB-R is one of the largest recyclers of aluminum beverage containers in the world and annually recycles more than 27 billion cans.

### Anheuser-Busch, Columbus Brewery is recognized for:

- Utilizing an Environmental Management System (EMS) to develop and track recycling success.
- A commitment to environmental stewardship reflected in its company policy and practices, employee and community involvement.
- Recycling or reusing more than 99.5 percent of all wastes generated by the Columbus brewery.
- A project to recycle plastic backing from bottle label carrier stock that diverted more than 226 tons of a plastic material from the landfill. The material initially had no viable recycling market and Anheuser-Busch realized a positive cash flow in excess of \$50,000 from this activity.

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The brewery's recycling program generates more than \$1,800,000 annually. This figure does not include the potential costs of landfill disposal of the recycled materials. Greater than 99.5% of all wastes generated by the brewery are recycled or re-used, representing more than 200,000 tons of material diverted from landfill each year. Recycled materials include beverage containers, PET banding, cardboard, glass, beech wood chips, filter media, spent grain, yeast and other biomass, scrap metal and wood pallets.

In 2007, a project to recycle plastic backing from bottle label carrier stock diverted more than 226 tons of a plastic material from the landfill. The material initially had no viable recycling market. Anheuser-Busch realized a positive cash flow in excess of \$50,000 from this activity.

## The Applied Plastic Label (APL) Recycling Program

In 2005, the labeling materials for several of Anheuser-Busch's high-volume brands were converted to an applied plastic label. This label is similar to a sticker and is roll-fed through high-speed labelers via a poly-ethyl (PET) carrier film with a silicon-based released liner.

The waste stream from the labelling process included scrap film and slicing tape. When the process was first implemented, there was not a viable recycling market for the scrap film, and the material was sent to a landfill for disposal. Subsequently, the brewery partnered with an overseas recycler that could use the film. In partnership with the recycler, it developed a method to economically transport and export the material for processing. Later, the company identified a domestic processor for this material that now utilizes the film in the production of resin decking similar to the Trex® product sold at home improvement stores. This recycling initiative required several changes to the set-up and operation of the labeling areas as well as the recycling dock/storage areas. The cooperation and commitment of the process operators was a key factor to the success of the project.

During 2007, more than 226 tons of the material was diverted and recycled and the brewery realized a direct positive cash flow from this activity in excess of \$50,000. In addition, it also avoided landfill costs of approximately \$20,000 annually.

## Teamwork and Innovation

The APL recycling project is a great example of innovation within the brewery. The switch to the plastic labeling was a necessary business decision, but created a new waste stream which was not possible to recycle at the outset. Through teamwork and innovation, a potential problem was turned into an opportunity for improvement.

The recycling process has been implemented throughout the Anheuser-Busch system and will likely be spread to the rest of the industry by the third-party vendor. The technology to process the material is proprietary to the processor. The ability to ship the material in a cost-efficient manner is a key component to the success of this venture and was an Anheuser-Busch innovation.

## For more information

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If you would like additional information about Ohio EPA's environmental stewardship award program, contact the Office of Compliance Assistance and Pollution Prevention (OCAPP) at 800-329-7518, or visit OCAPP's website at [www.epa.ohio.gov/ocapp/ohioe3.aspx](http://www.epa.ohio.gov/ocapp/ohioe3.aspx).