

# Local investors brew up spirits in Lynn

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LYNN — One works in asset management and has a background in molecular genetics. One is a marine geologist. Another works in advertising and a fourth is in sales.

“We’re four guys with different skill sets,” said Aaron Reames, a Swampscott resident and the lead investor in Bent Water Brewing, a start-up company that plans to open a microbrewery early next year at the old Lynn Lumber site on Commercial Street.

Reames, the lead investor in Bent Water Brewing, had first become intrigued with the idea when he attended a Case Western Reserve University class reunion in 2002 and learned that some fraternity brothers had started Switchback Brewing in Vermont. He and John Strom of Salem started making their own beer in 2008 at Reames’ home. They eventually obtained a 3½-barrel fermenter, equipment that is typically used in small microbreweries.

“We explored a lot of flavors you don’t see on the shelf,” said Reames, an Ohio native who had his first abstract in molecular genetics published when he was only 13.

Reames and Strom, a marine geologist, are putting their scientific training to good use in the new venture, as brewing beer is very much a science. To that end, Strom, who will be the head brewer at Bent Water, will spend six weeks this summer at the Siebel Institute of Technology in Chicago and six weeks at the Doemens World Brewing Academy in Germany.

“There are a lot of science and computer controls involved,” Strom said. “We are going to have high quality equipment and the ability to expand efficiently. The entire brew house will be able to be operated on iPhones and iPads. A lot of thought has gone into the design.”

The primary investors are Reames, Chris Crawford of Marblehead, Michael Lee, Scott Braunstein and Ted Goff. Strom and Mike Shaughnessy of Swampscott are also on the team. Crawford’s background is in sales, while Shaughnessy works in advertising and branding and has done work for



## Bent Water Brewing

Mary Jane Smalley, project manager for the EDIC; Chris Crawford; Arron Reames; James Cowdell, EDIC executive director; and Mike Shaughnessy stand at the site of what will be a new brewery on Commercial Street in Lynn.

major national brands.

Why Lynn?

“We’re doing something fun and creative,” Crawford said. “We bought into the revitalization of Lynn. We think the area has a bright future.”

Reames said meetings with Sen. Thomas McGee and EDIC Executive Director James Cowdell cemented the decision to base the company here.

“EDIC has strong visibility in the community and a willingness to support a new business venture like ours,” Reames said. “Once the vision Sen. McGee, Jim Cowdell, Mayor (Judith Flanagan) Kennedy and other city leaders have comes to fruition, Lynn will be an even more vibrant community. We’re glad to be here.”

“We are very pleased to have the opportunity to work with Bent Water Brewing on this venture,” Cowdell said. “Microbreweries have become a very hot industry and we’re excited to have one starting up in Lynn.”

Bent Water Brewing is leasing space from Meninno Construction, which owns the Lynn Lumber property, located only a few hundred feet from the Lynnway. Reames said Nick Meninno is playing an integral role in the design and build out.

“The availability of the right type of building was a key component,” Crawford said. “There is a wide-open floor plan and we can take advantage of the height of the building. We also have access to very good water in Lynn.”

State law requires a microbrewery be built before it can be licensed. Construction is expected to take about four months, with a projected opening of January 2016. Reames said there would be 12-20 employees initially and he envisions the brewery producing up to 10,000 barrels annually at the outset. The facility will include a tap room where people can sample and purchase beer.

Shaughnessy said there would be three categories of products: flagship products such as extra pale and IPA; several seasonal brews; and a rotating series of flavors. “It’s commonplace to have 8-12 types available at a time; we might have more,” he said.

One thing seems certain: This is a well-devised and thoroughly researched plan.

“We spent a lot of years doing due diligence,” said Strom. “We have met with brewers across the country and learned where they made their mistakes. We’ve brought in experts in every area. We have all the capital and operating agreements in place, the equipment has been purchased and the lease is signed. A lot of hours have been spent making sure our foundation is solid.”