ABL was pleased to celebrate its 12th anniversary in 2014, continuing its role as the nation’s preeminent trade association for beverage alcohol retailers. With thousands of members spanning 35 states, ABL is the voice of independent beverage alcohol licensees who serve and sell beer, wine and spirits at local bars, taverns and package stores. These businesses also act as grassroots advocates, amplifying messages from the retail tier of the alcohol industry.

ABL’s Board of Directors, which gives its time voluntarily to lead the association, knows how hard ABL members work, and is committed to working just as hard for them. That means keeping beverage licensees informed at every level, supporting responsible retailing and sales, and advocating on their behalf across the industry.

In 2014, ABL continued to lobby for responsible beverage alcohol policies. We took to Capitol Hill in June and met with more than 50 representatives and senators, sharing retailers’ concerns directly to those who affect policy. These meetings built on the interactions ABL members have with their elected officials in their home districts throughout the year.

Over the course of the year, ABL and its members also met with industry partners and the media to make sure licensees’ voices are heard. Grassroots advocacy efforts on Capitol Hill have extended ABL’s visibility; lawmakers are listening and people are talking.

We were excited and proud to welcome four new affiliate members this year, representing licensees from Florida, Idaho, Pennsylvania and Tennessee. These associations are strong representatives in their own states for retail alcohol business, and bring those strengths to ABL by extending the reach of the national association to more Congressional districts, Committees and offices on Capitol Hill.

Being part of ABL provides access to affiliates in other states as well as opportunities to share information, experiences and strategies for affiliates to protect their members and help their businesses. By providing opportunities to engage with their peers, ABL is helping its members connect and network.

Looking ahead to 2015, ABL will carefully identify issues in which to engage and serve its members with a voice in Washington, D.C. and across the industry. That means modernizing how we conduct business as a trade association; engaging our members; building momentum on social media and other communications platforms; and, as always, advocating for effective beverage alcohol policies.

Strong member businesses make ABL a strong association. It is an honor to represent the on- and off-premise independent beverage alcohol licensees of our great industry, and we look forward to another year of working for America’s Beer, Wine & Spirits Retailers.

Harry Klock
ABL President
Stockman Bar
Harlowton, MT

John D. Bodnovich
ABL Executive Director
Bethesda, MD
Updated Economic Impact Study a powerful tool for ABL members

Biennial Economic Impact Study
In November, ABL released an updated economic impact study detailing the positive effect that America’s beer, wine and spirits retailers have on their local, state and national economies through job creation, good wages and direct economic contribution. The 2014 Economic Impact Study of America’s Beer, Wine and Spirits Retailers provides an in-depth look at the positive role that beverage licensees are playing by generating more than 1.77 million jobs from direct retail alcohol sales and contributing a total economic impact of more than $245 billion.

ABL’s biennial study, performed by the economic research firm John Dunham & Associates, updated the 2012 Economic Impact Study of America’s Beer, Wine and Spirits Retailers, examining on- and off-premise retail alcohol beverage sales accounting for full-time equivalent jobs.

The study reflects increased productivity in the beverage alcohol retail industry with sales growth and job growth increasing overall since 2012. Underlying these gains is a vibrant American alcohol marketplace and a Three-Tier framework that provides consumers with more beer, wine and spirits options than ever before.

Study Expanded to Capture Full Impact of Businesses
The 2014 version was enhanced to provide a broader picture of the impact of licensed establishments, many of which sell other products in addition to beverage alcohol, including food. These figures take into account that alcohol sales often lead to other sales that many businesses depend on and are a substantial portion of their revenues and profits. An interactive website gives users the option of generating national, state and local reports based on all sales by on-premise, full-service restaurants and drinking places as well as off-premise package stores.

Also included in the study is a blood alcohol content (BAC) policy analysis that examines the effect of reducing the legal BAC limit for driving and what effect that would have on the economic contributions of the hospitality industry. Beverage licensees currently work with law enforcement, regulators, legislators and their customers to support the strong enforcement of 0.08% BAC laws.

An Advocacy Tool for ABL Members
ABL members have access to the 2014 Economic Impact Study of America’s Beer, Wine and Spirits Retailers and are able to generate tailored reports and download data via the ABL website, www.ablusa.org. These reports and talking points can be broken out at the National, State, Congressional District and State Legislative District levels, providing ABL members the ability to quantify the significant contributions they make to their communities when it comes to jobs, taxes and economic impact. To access the study, members can contact the ABL office.

“AFL is excited to share this new data with our members, the beverage alcohol industry and those who make decisions that affect licensees,” said ABL Executive Director John Bodnovich. “Locally-owned, Main Street beverage businesses – bars, taverns, and package stores – are a driving force in a broader economic story.”

Key Findings of the 2014 Economic Impact Study of America’s Beer, Wine and Spirits Retailers include:

- Direct retail alcohol sales from beer, wine and spirits licensees employ as many as 1,774,800 people across the U.S. and generate an additional 777,360 jobs in supplier and ancillary industries.

- These are good jobs that pay an average of $36,062 in wages and benefits.

- In 2014, the industry will be responsible for as much as $245 billion in total economic activity throughout the country.

- Nationally, the industry and its employees pay over $19.3 billion in federal taxes, and $16.9 billion in state and local taxes.
Though it was a mid-term election year marked by a historically inactive Congress, ABL continued federal legislative advocacy efforts in 2014 as the voice of independent beverage licensees on Capitol Hill.

2014 ABL Lobby Day
ABL members climbed Capitol Hill on June 10, meeting with over 50 Congressional offices to talk about transportation issues, tax policy and alcohol industry issues. Part of the ABL Annual Conference, members made a grassroots legislative push on behalf of bars, taverns, and liquor stores across the country.

ABL Weighs-In on 0.05% BAC
ABL led a coalition of eight beverage alcohol industry associations in a letter to the Senate Commerce Committee in December opposing lowering federal BAC standards for drunk driving from 0.08% to 0.05%. ABL will continue its strong support of 0.08% BAC laws and oppose 0.05% BAC initiatives in 2015.

Music Licensing
In August, ABL sent a letter to the Department of Justice sharing concerns about rules governing ASCAP and BMI. ABL addressed premise measurement standards; rate setting; and the lack of an affordable method of recourse for aggrieved licensees. ABL recommended ways to improve the process for beverage licensees and expects to work on this issue in 2015.

TTB Funding
In September, ABL joined several alcohol industry trade associations to support the full funding of the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) citing “The agency's ability to respond swiftly and properly to changes in the alcohol industry” and its “direct impact on jobs, consumer protection, the innovation of new products, and the collection of federal excise taxes.”

More Time for Full Time
ABL supported legislation in 2014 that would define full-time employment at 40 hours a week instead of the 30 hours a week.

Minimum Wage
ABL actively opposed increasing the federal minimum wage and more than tripling the tipped minimum wage, which would have a devastating effect on bars, taverns and other on-premise establishments.

Transportation
ABL maintained a strong position on alcohol-related traffic safety provisions, opposing unfunded federal mandates on states and their impaired driving policies.

Tax Policy
ABL supported improving the tax climate for small businesses by calling for the repeal of the estate tax; seeking marketplace fairness for brick-and-mortar retailers; and asking that comprehensive tax reform not come at the expense of s-corporations.

Junk Science
ABL continued to voice its opposition to junk science and misleading media reports suggesting that arbitrarily closing bars and liquor stores would decrease domestic violence. ABL pointed out that one-size-fits-all policies do not take into account local beverage alcohol culture and customs; ignore effective long-standing policies for responsible sales and service; and unjustly disparage hundreds of thousands of law-abiding hospitality businesses that employ millions of Americans.

114th Congress (2015-2016)
Federal surface transportation legislation, music licensing laws, tax reform and changes to the Affordable Care Act are all expected to be addressed with legislation in the 114th Congress.

2014 Legislation
Transportation
Drunk Driving Repeat Offender Prevention Act
Alisa’s Law of 2014

Taxes
Death Tax Repeal Act
Marketplace Fairness Act
Marketplace and Internet Tax Fairness Act
Small Brewer Reinvestment and Expanding Workforce Act
Brewers Excise and Economic Relief Act
Cider Industry Deserves Equal Regulation Act

Labor
Forty Hours Is Full Time Act
Save American Workers Act
Fair Minimum Wage Act
Minimum Wage Fairness Act

Marijuana
Ending Federal Marijuana Prohibition Act
States’ Medical Marijuana Patient Protection Act
Protection Act
Respect State Marijuana Laws Act
National Commission on Federal Marijuana Policy Act
Marijuana Businesses Access to Banking Act
Connecting retailers to each other & their industry

ABL Insider
This year, the ABL Insider was published four times, and continues to serve as ABL's quarterly member magazine. Each issue is crafted from specially curated content that addresses issues important to licensed beverage retailers. The Insider features a different topics of focus, and often includes guest columns from scientists, politicians, or industry experts. ABL will continue to publish the Insider in 2015, but is in the process of redesigning the look and feel of the publication.

ABL Weekly
Our weekly e-newsletter continues to be popular among our members and the industry at-large. ABL collects relevant news articles, industry updates, and upcoming events with a decidedly retail focus to share with you each Friday. Topics include public policy updates that affect your business, important ABL news, affiliate, industry, and state news, and important business and lifestyle articles. The ABL Weekly lands in the inboxes of beverage licensees, as well as prominent associations, industry groups, and companies.

ABL Infographics
ABL is continuing to modernize communications by including more infographics and photo-focused banners. Launched with the announcement of this year's Package Liquor Store Month, ABL has continued to creatively imbed infographics into its communications. These easy to read and easier to share content graphics help increase ABL's reach to new and untapped audiences.

Social Media
Are you following ABL on Twitter and Facebook? If not, now is a good time to “Like” or “Follow” @ABLUSA. ABL has increased its presence on three key social media sites, including LinkedIn and will continue to use these platforms as a way to stay engaged with members and key partners. From fun lifestyle shares to important conversations about relevant topics, you can join ABL on social media and stay tuned-in to the latest industry information.

Washington, DC Update
Part of ABL's mission is to lobby on behalf of beverage alcohol retailers across the country. The monthly ABL Washington, DC Update keeps members in-the-know on the latest legislative news, ABL's lobbying efforts, and key bills and legislation to watch for in the coming months. ABL also includes position statements on retail alcohol policies and issues.
2014 Annual Conference & Lobby Day

Industry experts, member of Congress, and members gathered in Washington, D.C. for ABL’s 2014 Annual Conference. Presentation topics included alcohol & hospitality litigation, grassroots lobbying, impaired driving, marijuana policy and others. ABL and members visited 50 Senate and House of Representatives offices in May 2014 during Lobby Day, an annual gathering on Capitol Hill.

2014 Conference Sponsors
2 Gingers Irish Whiskey
Brown-Forman
Distilled Spirits Council of the United States
MillerCoors
National Association of Beverage Importers
The Presidents’ Forum of the Distilled Spirits Industry

New State Affiliate Members

In 2014, ABL was pleased to welcome four new state affiliates representing on-premise and off-premise beverage licensees.

January 2014
Tennessee Wine & Spirits Retailers Association

February 2014
Idaho Licensed Beverage Associated

March 2014
Malt Beverage Distributors Association of Pennsylvania

October 2014
Florida Independent Spirits Association

2014 Associate Members

DIAMOND
Beer Institute
Diageo
National Beer Wholesalers Association
Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America

GOLD
Brown-Forman
Castle Brands
Charmer Sunbelt Group
Glazer’s
Pernod Ricard USA
Republic National Distributing Company

SILVER
Constellation Brands
Moet Hennessy USA

SILVER
Monarch Beverage Company
Patron Spirits Company
Remy Cointreau USA

BRONZE
CardTronics
Luxco
Presidents’ Forum of the Distilled Spirits Industry
Sidney Frank Importing Company
WHAT’S NEXT?

Marijuana Debate

Marijuana is increasingly top of mind in many parts of the country as states add measures to regulate its medical and recreational forms. With more states expected to address the issue in 2015 and 2016, the beverage alcohol industry continues to weigh the impact of recreational marijuana’s growth.

Many beverage alcohol retailers are debating whether they should have a role in the recreational marijuana marketplace and how to respond to legalization campaigns that disparage beer, wine and spirits.

What is clear from states that have legalized marijuana is that it brings a host of challenges to cities and states. From establishing new marketplaces; developing stringent guidelines; implementing reasonable enforcement; ensuring quality control for a unique product; and harmonizing state regulations with Federal standards; there are more questions being asked than answers to be had.

While neutral on legalization, ABL is working with members and the industry to gather materials and information that can be useful in the discussion about legalizing marijuana. ABL continues to monitor federal marijuana legislation and listen to the concerns of its members. Throughout 2015, ABL will communicate with members to make sure they have the information they need when faced with this evolving and important issue.

114th Congress

Thanks to the 2014 midterm elections, Republican will enjoy bicameral control of Congress when the 114th Congress gets underway in January 2015.

GOP leaders plan on addressing Obama Administration actions with legislation aimed at repealing parts of the Affordable Care Act; reining-in executive actions on immigration and otherwise advancing the Republican agenda ahead of what is expected to be a competitive 2016 Presidential primary season.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) and House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) have vowed greater oversight of federal agencies and will be pushed by their party’s conservative wing to address government overreach and waste. Congress has until May to tackle transportation legislation; there is discussion about a music licensing bill; and there will likely being a further push to repeal parts of the Dodd-Frank financial reform bill of 2010.

Stay tuned for more information about the new Congress, ABL’s grassroots initiatives and how you can make your voice heard in Washington.

Alcohol Responsibility

Part of ABL’s mission is to promote responsible retailing and beverage alcohol consumption. While each state has its own unique laws and regulations governing beverage alcohol, ABL believes that all retailers play a vital role in promoting responsible consumption of beverage alcohol products.

ABL encourages its members to participate in responsibility programs and campaigns that have been effective in addressing drunk driving and underage access to beverage alcohol. Not only is it the right thing to do, but it also helps shape a responsible beverage alcohol marketplace, be it in on- or off-premise settings.

ABL remains committed to ensuring the longevity of the beverage alcohol retail community and that begins with ensuring the trust of friends, family and customers.
2014-2015 ABL OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
Harry Klock
Montana Tavern Association
Stockman Bar | Harlowton, MT

VICE PRESIDENTS
Skip Boise
Empire State Restaurant & Tavern Association
The Tavern | Cortland, NY

Terry Harvath
Tavern League of Wisconsin
The Wishing Well Bar & Grill | Appleton, WI

Victor Pittman
Mississippi Hospitality Beverage Association
Silver Leaf Wines & Spirits | Ridgeland, MS

Paul Santelle
New Jersey Liquor Store Alliance
Garden State Discount Liquors | Perth Amboy, NJ

TREASURER
Warren Scheidt
Indiana Association of Beverage Retailers
The Cork | Columbus, IN

American Beverage Licensees
America's Beer, Wine and Spirits Retailers
5101 River Rd, Suite 108
Bethesda, MD 20816
Tel: 301-656-1494
www.ablusa.org

ABL STAFF
John D. Bodnovich | Executive Director
Susan Day Duffy | Director, Trade Relations and Operations
Jessica Anders | Manager, Communications & Public Relations

facebook.com/ABLUSA
@ablusa