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County names finalists in brewery competition

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Days after its four awards packages were fully funded by a \$185,000 state grant, Livingston County Development has revealed 15 finalists in its Brew IN Livingston competition, which aims to establish a beer trail within the county.

“We’ve been overwhelmed by the response to this initiative,” Executive Director Bill Bacon. “Not only have we received more response than was anticipated, but the quality of submissions has been remarkable.”

Of 35 finalists, 29 sent in short videos to Livingston County Development to give judges a feel for their proposed breweries and the types of beer they would offer.

Contestants are ultimately competing for four equal prize packages which include access to \$35,000 in grant funds, \$100,000 in low-interest loans and an array of business assistance and other services from groups like the Livingston County Area Chamber of Commerce and the New York State Brewers Association.

Finalists will receive technical assistance through a “business boot camp” designed to assist with building and refining a business plan. Throughout the five-week course, contestants will hear from professional service providers on licensing, trademark, business finance, taxes, branding and marketing.

Owners from breweries including Three Heads Brewing in Rochester and Big Ditch Brewing Company in Buffalo will speak to finalists about their experience starting and running a brewery

The 15 finalists are Dublin Corners Farm Brewery; Battle Street Brewing; Heroes Brewing; Amber Lantern Brewing Company; Charred Brewery; Dansville Brewing Company; Hemlock Hills Ciderhouse; Hop Habit Brewing Company; Horns and Halos Brewing; Legacy Hill Brewery; Mortalis Brewing Company; Mystic Valley Brewing; OSB Ciderworks; Quiet Storm Brewing Company and Recluse Brewing Company.

Maureen Wheeler, deputy director of Livingston County Development, said some of the finalists had secured locations while others were still looking.

Of the 15 finalists, Dublin Corners Farm Brewery in the York hamlet of Linwood and OSB Ciderworks in Lakeville are already up, running and selling product.

Battle Street Brewing in Dansville has already started renovations on the old train station that will eventually house the business and Horns and Halos Brewery in Caledonia is expected to begin renovations soon.

The competition’s four winners will be announced in March of next year.

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