

STANDING STONE BREWING COMPANY

Cheese and Beer in High Gear: Rogue Creamery and Standing Stone Brewing Co. Unite on Innovative Employee Bike Commuting Program

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CONTACT: Alex Amarotico, alex@standingstonebrewing.com, 541-494-8333

CONTACT: Francis Plowman, fplowman@roguecreamery.com, 541-665-1155 x123

(Ashland, OR) Standing Stone Brewing Company (SSBC) and Rogue Creamery put a creative spin on their longtime business partnership when Standing Stone inspired Rogue Creamery to implement a bike commuting program that the brewery launched in late 2009. Employees who have worked at least 1,000 hours and agree to bike commute 45 times in a year receive free bikes, reducing fuel use and carbon footprint while promoting health.



It all started with a wager made over a few pints of ale. Rogue Creamery co-owner David Gremmels stopped by for a beer and asked SSBC co-owner Alex Amarotico about the brewery's bike program, mentioning that his team members were interested. "I offered to buy a bike for cheesemaker and plant manager Craig Nelson if he committed to participate, and if David and co-owner Cary Bryant agreed to buy bikes for their team members," says Amarotico. "I was pleasantly surprised when David said Craig and the Creamery were in."

"When we heard what Standing Stone was doing, we thought it would be great to do, says Gremmels. "We're excited to find ways to improve our environmental impact, benefit our team members and enjoy the community while biking to work." Amarotico gave Nelson a Standing Stone Kona bike in October to jump start Rogue Creamery's "Nellie Green Pedal Power Program." The Creamery's initiative launched in December 2009 with 21 team members signed on, joining 17 employees in Standing Stone's program.

Employees are geared up to commute gas-free. Standing Stone Chef Eric Bell says, "I love my bike and what Alex and Danielle (Amarotico) do here. It's great they did this program and really neat to work at a place with values you really believe in." Many Rogue Creamery team members were so excited about the opportunity that they started commuting by bike right away, despite the wet weather that marked their December kickoff. "Who cares about a little rain?" says Steven Bradshaw, Cheesemaker Assistant.

Both businesses got a financial boost from the State of Oregon's Business Energy Tax Credit (BETC), covering 35% of the cost. The BETC program provides tax credits to help businesses cover the cost of environmentally oriented energy projects, such as energy efficiency, renewable power and commuting. Standing Stone's program eliminates 6,752 miles of car trips, saving 300 gallons of gas and 3 tons of greenhouse gas emissions.

Rogue Creamery initiated the effort as part of its broader "Nellie Green program," focused on community and environmental stewardship. The company has also earned the Food Alliance's "Certified Sustainable" seal, sources local sustainable and organic milk from pasture-fed cows, and strives to reduce resource use and waste. Like the Creamery, SSBC is committed to cutting-edge efforts that reduce its environmental footprint and benefit employees and the community, such as using local and organic food, reducing energy use, installing solar, diverting almost 80% of waste materials from landfills and supporting diverse community causes. Amarotico is glad his efforts have inspired others. "It would be great to see even more businesses get rolling in this direction."

Photo Gallery: Standing Stone Brewing Co. co-owners and employees ride their new bikes to celebrate the kickoff of Standing Stone's "RPM Club" employee bike commuting program <http://picasaweb.google.com/standingstonebrewing/THEDAYOFTHEBIKES#> (Photo credit—George Rubaloff)

Photo attached (RCSSBCBikes.jpg): Rogue Creamery co-owners David Gremmels and Cary Bryant, Standing Stone Brewing Co co-owner Alex Amarotico, and Rogue Creamery Craig Nelson with the new employee commuter bike he received from Standing Stone. (Photo credit—Ginger Johnson)

Photo attached (RCTeamMembersBikes.jpg): Rogue Creamery Team Members with the new "Nellie Green Pedal Power" bikes (Photo Credit – TDB)

About Standing Stone Brewing Co (SSBC): This family-owned, full-service brewpub in Ashland, OR is committed to craft beers, fine food, a positive dining experience, employees, community and sustainability. SSBC offers its own freshly brewed handcrafted ales and lagers, including seasonal and other specialty brews. All Standing Stone Ales are made at the brewery in ten-barrel batches using over 80% organic malts. Local and organic foods are a focus on the menu, and the SSBC has been recognized widely for its accomplishments in environmental sustainability and its support for its family of employees and the community. More info: standingstonebrewing.com

About Rogue Creamery: Rogue Creamery is a team of people dedicated to sustainability, service and the art and tradition of making the world's finest handmade cheese. Its blue cheese was awarded "Best of Show" at the 2009 American Cheese Society Competition and Judging and "Best Blue Cheese" award at the 2003 World Cheese Awards in London, England. Founded in 1928, Rogue Creamery is located in the beautiful Rogue Valley of Southern Oregon and over the last half century it has introduced a flight of eight distinctive varieties of hand-crafted artisan blue cheeses and variety of gourmet cheddars. Rogue Creamery's handmade cheese is produced from sustainable and organic certified raw milk and made using old world sustainable practices. More info: roguecreamery.com