



Inspired Brewing®

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Breweries, local companies team up to divert plastic from local landfills

KALAMAZOO, Mich. - A Kalamazoo-area recycling “co-op,” that includes six local craft breweries, will divert about 26,000 lbs. of plastic per year from Michigan landfills.

The collaborative led by [the Kalamazoo Nature Center](#) and Bell’s Brewery, applied for, and received a \$12,000 Recycling Market Development Grant from the [Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy \(EGLE\)](#).

[One Well Brewing](#), [Latitude 42 Brewing Company](#), [Kalamazoo Valley Community College’s sustainable brewing program](#), Handmap Brewing (Battle Creek), [Final Gravity](#), [Territorial Brewing Company](#) (also located in Battle Creek) and natural hops, spice and herb extract provider [Kalsec](#) are all participating by collecting and contributing material to this initiative.

Based on a similar program developed by [Great Divide Brewing Co](#), the grant was used to purchase two balers. One provides a recycling outlet for bags made of woven polypropylene that are used for brewing grains, like barley, and other ingredients that come in large quantities.

“These bags, which also include super sacks (bulk bags that can hold up to 3,000 lbs.) are recyclable. The problem was that up until now, none of us had access to a viable recycling outlet for it,” Kate Martini, Bell’s Sustainability Specialist said.

In order to make this material viable for a recycler, we needed to have truck loads of the stuff, which most breweries do not generate on their own, even here at Bell’s. We also needed equipment to bale all of it for transport, Martini added.

The grant facilitated the purchase of the baling equipment and by inviting other breweries and manufacturers to participate, minimum quantities will be met.

The second baler will be used to consolidate cardboard from participating partners. Baling cardboard makes it eligible for a small rebate and the revenue from this material stream is used to sustain the program. It also has the added benefit of alleviating the need for partners to pay for their own small-scale cardboard recycling program.

Finished bales of material will be processed through a partnership with [Padnos](#) in Grand Rapids and their Kalamazoo partner AJ’s Recycling Services.

Those interested in becoming a co-op partner should fill out [this form](#). Visit [bellsbeer.com](#) for more on Bell’s sustainability initiatives.

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ABOUT BELL’S BREWERY

Bell's Brewery, Inc. began in 1985 with a quest for better beer and a 15 gallon soup kettle. Since then, we've grown into a regional craft brewery that distributes to 43 states, in addition to Puerto Rico and Washington DC. The dedication to brewing flavorful, unfiltered, quality craft beers that started in 1985 is still with us today. We currently brew over 20 beers for distribution as well as many other small batch beers that are served at our pub in Kalamazoo, the Eccentric Cafe. Our ongoing goal is to brew thoughtfully, creatively and artistically. 100% family-owned and independent, we strive to bring an authentic and pleasant experience to all of our customers through our unique ales and lagers. For more information, please visit [bellsbeer.com](#).