

VENTURA BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM SUCCESS STORY: SURF BREWERY



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Riding the Wave of Support: The City of Ventura Business Assistance Program and EDC-VC’s Small Business Development Center helped turn Surf Brewery from an idea into a thriving business.

Bill Riegler spent 25 years in chemical R&D, marketing and technical sales. Like many people, he often dreamed of branching out and trying his hand at something else. A surfer who’d been interested in brewing since the 1980s, Riegler and a group of six friends decided to open a surf-themed brewery in Ventura. Two-and-a-half years later Surf Brewery opened, on June 8, 2011.

With help from the City of Ventura and the EDC-VC, Surf Brewery was able to secure a loan, find a site location and meet the myriad of challenges the owners faced during the development process.

LAYING THE GROUND FLOOR

Securing a location was not as easy as Riegler and his partners thought it would be. Some landlords didn’t want a long-term lease. Others didn’t want a brewery taking over their location. After 13 possible locations, the partners settled on Market Street in Ventura.

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In 2012, we got back in touch with the EDC-VC and secured another City of Ventura loan to help with our growth. We had grown steadily and needed the funds to support our continued expansion,” said Riegler.

INNOVATING SUCCESS

While Surf Brewery does have a tasting room on location, the company makes most of its revenue through commercial sales. “We’re not a brew pub,” continued Riegler. “We have a few of those around here, but they don’t distribute on a large scale like we do. We distribute our product in kegs and bottles from Paso Robles to San Diego.”

GROWING FROM THE INSIDE

The company has 18 employees and is producing twice the amount of beer as when it started. In 2014, the brewery started a barrel-aging program and plans to more than double it.



1601 Carmen Drive, Suite 215
Camarillo, CA 93010
805-384-1800 • info@edc-vc.com
www.edc-vc.com

