

# 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.



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