



Brewery Outré Kalamazoo, Michigan

"I am fully embracing entrepreneurship. It has been my goal for a long time." – Ted Linabury

- New Business
- Located in an LMI Community
- Opportunity Zone and HUBZone
- Business located where more than 50% of the full-time workforce is low income

Ted Linabury wrote his first business plan in high school. It was for custom rollercoasters rich people could build in their yards. The second one, in college, was for a fully automated restaurant with no human employees.

The third time's the charm.



Linabury, 30, is a mechanical engineer and a craft brewer who is about to open a new taproom and the pandemic motivated him. "Once people started working from home I thought, 'This is the excuse I need,'" and he got to work on his third business plan. "It's probably a good thing the robot restaurant wasn't funded or this brewery might not exist," he laughed.

Brewery Outré is opening in Kalamazoo's River Edge neighborhood, a former industrial and warehouse district undergoing a revival. It's close to downtown, has nearby parks and trails and lots of new, fun places to shop, eat and live. Brewery Outré is on the ground floor of the Harrison Circle Building, which has 80 apartments, as well as a café.

Northern Initiatives continues to grow its outreach and lending in West Michigan. “With support from LISC, Northern Initiatives is continuing to expand its efforts to serve small businesses in Kalamazoo,” said Elissa Sangalli, President of Northern Initiatives.

Linabury has been brewing beer since before he was old enough to drink it. He turned 21 while working at an engineering internship in Asheville, N.C. That’s when he first tasted saison, a pale ale “that is the product of its environment,” he said. Saison was originally made by seasonal workers who used the ingredients on hand – and that is what Linabury strives for in his brews. He is always looking for local hops, malt, yeast, lavender and other ingredients, as well as wine grapes for use in beer. “Wine grapes contribute more flavor than any other fruit and they ferment really well. You get a lot more bang for your buck,” he said.

(The search for local wild yeast is, well, wild. Right now he’s got a yeast strain banked at a lab in Chicago that was captured on Michigan’s Keweenaw Peninsula.)

Linabury is opening Brewery Outré at an auspicious time. As he outlined in his business plan, the number of breweries that can be supported in an area corresponds with population – and Kalamazoo, once oversaturated, now has room for more. “We had eight breweries at our peak and we’ve lost half of those” over the last couple years, Linabury said.



The Brewery Outré brand has been around since 2017, when Linabury partnered with an existing brewery and meadery, Norse Nectar. He brewed on their system, experimented and developed styles and recipes, and built a following within the local craft beer community.

In 2019, he looked into opening a brewery in a different building that was being renovated. That location didn’t work out, but he met Venard Roberson, a commercial lender with Northern Initiatives, during the process. They kept in touch and when Linabury found the River’s Edge location, he worked with Roberson on the business plan and loan application.

The loan from Northern Initiatives has helped Linabury buy a 4-barrel brewing system, as well as furniture, ingredients, and working capital. A local credit union helped finance the leasehold improvements.

The new pub has seating for 55 people; Linabury estimates he'll need to brew one or two batches of beer (8-10 kegs each) per week. Among innovative and novel styles, he plans to keep a "regular beer," like an American lager, on tap as his least expensive beer, as well as local kombucha and soft drinks. He's also partnering with the neighboring café to offer food and has a patio for outdoor seating – and growing. He already knows where he wants to plant hops.

More than anything, he's looking forward running his own business. "I am fully embracing entrepreneurship," he said. "It has been my goal for a long time."