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Beer and Cider Trail a big boost for local tourism

Star staff report

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Lindsey and John Gruver of Pennsylvania hold some of the special prizes they were recently awarded for being the 1,000th and 1,001st people to follow Winchester's Beer and Cider Trail.

Courtesy photo

Winchester's Beer and Cider Trail, established two years ago by the Winchester-Frederick County Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), has been traveled by more than 1,000 people.

"When we created this program, we really thought it would be a smaller initiative with mostly local and regional participants," Justin Kerns, executive director of the Winchester-Frederick County CVB, said this week in a media release. "However, with how close our brewery partners are to each other and how many visitors come for two or three nights, it seems that it has become a fun multi-day challenge for many of the outside visitors to our incredible community. The goal of this trail was to have people spend a little more at our local businesses while exploring in our community, and we feel it has delivered well beyond what we hoped for."

People who want to follow the Beer and Cider Trail can start by picking up a free passport at any participating brewery or distillery, or at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center at 1400 S. Pleasant Valley Road. By following a map printed on the passports, participants can collect a stamp at each business. After they collect four or more stamps, users can bring their passports back to the Visitors Center and redeem them for free prizes.

The 1,000th and 1,001st passports were recently redeemed at the Winchester-Frederick County Visitors Center by Lindsey and John Gruver, who were visiting from Pennsylvania. The Gruvers were treated to a special prize package with contributions from all the local trail stops.

Since its launch in April 2024, the Winchester Beer and Cider Trail has redeemed completed passports by visitors from 36 states and two foreign countries, the media release states. That redemption rate equals about 1.2 passports per day for 27 straight months.

The Beer and Cider Trail originally showcased a total of eight breweries and hard cider distilleries in Winchester: Alesatian Brewing Co., Broken Window Brewing Co., Dividing Creek Beer Co., Escutcheon Brewing Co., Old Town Cidery, Vibrissa Beer, Winchester Brew Works and Winchester Cider Works. Since then, Winchester Cider Works has closed and Three Wives Distillery of Frederick County has taken its place.

With the updated lineup of breweries and cider distilleries, the CVB is planning an upcoming relaunch of the trail with a new passport, new prizes and an opportunity for participants to rate their favorite beverage and business, the media release states. The CVB plans to tally those votes for an annual awards recognition for the winning breweries.

For more information about Winchester's Beer and Cider Trail, go to winchesterbrewtrail.com