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The nearly 75-year-old Anheuser-Busch beer brewery in Newark will close early next year after being sold, the company said.

The St. Louis-based company announced Thursday that the plant along Routes 1 & 9 will close early next year along with Anheuser-Busch breweries in Fairfield, California and Merrimack, New Hampshire.

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The 475-employees at the three plants will be offered jobs at one of Anheuser-Busch's other facilities along with money to move and training to learn new skills. Employees who don't want to be relocated will be offered severance packages.

"We will be shifting production from these three facilities to our other U.S. facilities and these changes will enable us to invest even more in our remaining operations and in our portfolio of growing, industry-leading brands," the company said in a statement.

The Newark facility is being sold to the Goodman Group which "plans to repurpose the site for industrial manufacturing and logistics uses," the company said.

At the plant on Thursday, located across from Newark Liberty International Airport, tractor trailers moved in and out of the sprawling compound through a narrow and closely monitored entrance. An NJ Advance Media reporter was not allowed past the gates.

Anheuser-Busch said it has invested \$2 billion in its 100 U.S. facilities.

[Company leaders averted a nationwide strike](#) last year by agreeing to a five-year agreement that would significantly raise pay, improve health care and

retirement benefits, and enhance job security for workers days ahead of a planned walkout.

The [Anheuser-Busch brewery in Newark](#) opened in 1951 and is the second oldest of the company's 12 U.S. breweries. The original brewing location and company headquarters opened in [1850 in St. Louis, Missouri](#).

Many of the company's core brands are brewed at the Newark facility, including Budweiser and Bud Light, Busch, Busch Light, Natural Light and Rolling Rock.

The Newark factory drew praise in 2022 when it [stepped in to brew Chernigivske, Anheuser-Busch's most popular beer in Ukraine](#), after the company closed its three breweries in Ukraine leading up to the invasion by Russia.

There have been other labor battles at the site over the decades. Anheuser-Busch [cut 60 jobs at the plant in 2015](#).

The Anheuser-Busch plant is one of the last working vestiges of Newark's heyday as a beer mecca in the 19th and early 20th centuries, when the now-defunct and partly demolished [Ballantine brewery](#) was one of the world's largest, and the city's [beer barons built mansions](#) that survive to this day in varying states of preservation.

Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka lamented the departure of the King of Beers, though he raised a glass to Anheuser-Busch's concern for its employees.

"I am sorry to see Budweiser leave our city after having called Newark home since 1951 and been part of so many families' history here," Baraka said in a statement. "But I'm glad to know that the brewery intends to take care of the employees by helping them relocate and retrain, or take a severance package."

"I wish the company and all its employees well," Baraka added. "And I welcome the Goodman Group as it prepares to put roots in Newark."

Iconic Anheuser-Busch eagle sign leaving Newark when brewery closes



The Anheuser-Busch eagle sign atop the company's Newark brewery will be removed and sent to the company's St. Louis headquarters after the brewery's closing in early 2026 announced on Thursday, according to the property's buyer, Goodman North America, which plans to redevelop the site for other industrial uses. The sign is seen here in 2012. Tim Farrell | The Star-Ledger

By

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Thursday's announcement by Anheuser-Busch that it will [close its Newark brewery](#) after 75 years will force employees there to decide whether to accept the company's offer to relocate or lose their jobs.

But for countless nostalgic or aesthetically minded motorists, air travelers and residents of the city and surrounding region, the announcement raised a separate question that may be less sobering but one with a potential emotional hangover all its own.

“Is the Anheuser-Busch neon sign staying?” [John Abeigon](#), a city resident and president of the Newark Teachers Union, asked after he learned the brewery would close. “That’s been an iconic landmark for 75 years, both on the ground and for flights arriving and leaving from Newark. Coming home late at night, we knew we were close.”

The answer to Abeigon’s question, sadly for many, is that the sign will be taken down and sent to Anheuser-Busch’s St. Louis headquarters, according to a spokesman for [Goodman North America](#), the California-based subsidiary of the Australian Goodman Group.

“Anheuser-Busch will be retaining the eagle and all other iconic items and moving to their head office in St Louis,” the spokesman, Ben Bytheway, said in an email on Friday, acknowledging the sign as “an iconic symbol.”

Goodman plans to redevelop the site for other industrial uses, though Bytheway said the company had not yet determined whether the red-brick brewery would be demolished.

[Anheuser-Busch](#), whose brands include Budweiser, Michelob and Stella Artois, did not respond to requests for comment on Friday.

The current version of the sign is 34 feet across and weighs 15 tons, made from 4,500 feet of neon tubing and 2,000 incandescent bulbs. It was installed by the company in 2001 to celebrate its 50th year in operation and the Budweiser brand’s 125th year in ice chests and refrigerators.

The region immediately took notice when the sign [went dark in 2012](#) due to a malfunction, and stayed off for several months before being repaired.

A Federal Aviation Administration spokesman told The Star-Ledger at the time that air traffic controllers at Newark Liberty International would instruct helicopter pilots to [look out for the eagle](#) as they approached the airport.

To local historians, the eagle sign represents Newark's heyday as a malt mecca in the 19th and 20th centuries, when dozens of breweries sprang up to take advantage of the city's pristine water supply from its vast watershed property in Sussex County.

Ballantine, [Pabst](#) and Kreuger's are some of the biggest names from Newark's brewing past, whose beer barons built mansions on High and Washington streets, several of them still standing.

Unlike most of the city's other commercial-scale breweries, however, the Anheuser-Busch plant remains in operation — at least until early 2026, when the company said it will close and the property will be transferred to Goodman.

The company said it would eliminate 475 full-time jobs at the Newark brewery and two others also closing, in Fairfield, California, and Merrimack, New Hampshire, though employees would be offered jobs at other company locations.

The brewery opened in 1951, and over the decades the eagle sign became a beacon of barley and hops, signaling to motorists and air travelers flying into nearby Newark Liberty International Airport that they were passing through or arriving in New Jersey's largest city.

The sign towers above the city's South Ward near the Elizabeth border, and for decades while lit at night it cast an eerie red glow through the rising steam produced by the brewing process.



The Anheuser-Busch Brewery and its iconic eagle sign in Newark, seen here on Dec. 11, 2025, the day the company announced its closing and sale. The sign will be removed, the buyer of the property said. Steve Strunsky | NJ Advance Media For NJ.com

“It’s a landmark — it lets you know that Budweiser is still there and everything’s going alright,” Newark City Historian [Junius Williams](#) said of the sign Friday, when a reporter told him of the brewery’s closing. “I’m sorry to hear that.”

On Thursday, the same day the closing was announced, Williams attended a press conference signaling the [start of construction](#) on a 300,000-square-foot film and television studio to be leased by Lionsgate. Like the brewery, the studio site is also in Newark’s South Ward and would mark a leap forward for movie and TV production as an industry already growing in the city.

“As we gain a new business, we lose another,” Williams said.

“Actually, it’s the end of an era,” he added, “because Anheuser-Busch was one of the last big breweries, I think the last big one. At one time, there were 75 breweries in the city.”

Robert Sinclair Jr., a spokesman for [AAA Northeast](#), a region that includes Newark and New York City, called the eagle sign, “one of those iconic roadside attractions.”

“It might be up there with the Paul Bunyon statue, wherever he might be,” Sinclair said.

Other, more specific examples include the [Domino Sugar sign](#) in Brooklyn, visible across the East River to motorists on Manhattan’s FDR Drive. Another vestige of the region’s manufacturing past is the [Colgate Clock](#) on the Jersey City waterfront, in view of drivers on Manhattan’s West Side Highway across the Hudson River.

“It’s one of those iconic signs that’s part of the landscape of the tri-state area,” Sinclair said. “These things are part of the charm of driving. The lure of the open road is a very strong one, and these things make it interesting.”

“It’ll be a little bit sad if it passes into history,” he said of the Anheuser-Busch sign. “I’ll miss it.”



Stories by [Steve Strunsky](#)

