



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### InvestSWVA / Appalachian Grains

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## Appalachian Grains Featured in New Beer from Michael Waltrip Brewing Company

*3 Ranges Appalachian Ale brewed from malted barley grains  
grown where Virginia begins, in Lee County*

**Bristol, Va.** – From a southwest Virginia farm straight to your frosted glass, Michael Waltrip Brewing Co. released its newest beer, *3 Ranges Appalachian Ale*. The brewery hosted a Harvest Celebration at its location in Bristol to unveil the newest brew available on tap. The beer is made with barley grown in Lee County.

“This is a great way to celebrate this year's harvest of Appalachian Grains, to help write a new chapter for agriculture in southwest Virginia and to contribute to a local economy that is now a second home to me,” said **Michael Waltrip Brewing Co- Founder and two-time Daytona 500 champion Michael Waltrip**. “Virginia's Southwest has special meaning for me, and with the opening of our Bristol location, to join other leaders in building and buying local is a privilege. We invite you to support our local farmers and businesses by coming to taste our newest beer: *3 Ranges Appalachian Ale*.”

The Michael Waltrip Brewing Company beer is named for the three major ranges of the Appalachian Mountains: Allegheny, Blue Ridge and Cumberland.

The story begins with Appalachian Grains, a Southwest Virginia specialty grain broker that connects local growers with craft breweries and distilleries across Virginia. Appalachian Grains is a private project launched under the support of InvestSWVA.

“The impact of our grains being used by someone like Michael Waltrip is significant. This collaboration delivers another growth opportunity to our southwest Virginia farmers, and it catapults our region into the national sustainability conversation,” **said InvestSWVA Director Will Payne.** “First, this is an economic development project that addresses the business priorities of supply and demand. We are helping farmers keep busy and earn more by producing high quality grains for an exploding market. Second, in strengthening the local supply chain to Virginia breweries and distilleries, we are reducing transportation costs, food miles and the carbon footprint of grain typically sourced from all over the world. All as we help Michael Waltrip Brewing deliver another great tasting beer.”

The malted barley is grown by farmers in Lee, Scott and Washington Counties. The first two grow seasons were successful in demonstrating that southwest Virginia can grow malted barley that meets the craft beverage industry’s high standards. In addition, the project has also given farmers a cash crop that also serves a gateway to a new market for their grain. The third season is underway with triple the amount of acreage to further demonstrate that the region is well positioned to scale this operation and become a major supplier to craft breweries and distilleries.

While this effort through Appalachian Grains is designed to generate growth opportunities for regional farmers, it also greatly reduces the carbon footprint required for importing grains from outside of Virginia. Most of the Commonwealth’s breweries and distilleries currently rely on grain from the Midwestern United States, Canada and Europe. Appalachian Grains has plans to further minimize the carbon footprint with the opening of a grain cleaning and storage facility in Norton in 2022. Known as Project Thoroughbred, the endeavor received \$500,000 from the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission and \$2.5 million from the Virginia Department of Energy’s Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization program.

“Project Thoroughbred advances many missions of Virginia Energy,” **said Virginia Energy Director John Warren.** “This project opens the market gateway for local farmers and will provide a new source of Virginia agricultural products. This grain distribution center is a true success story in the repurpose of a legacy coal site for the benefit of the community and Virginia’s vital agricultural sector.”

The Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority will own the terminal, which is expected to break ground soon and be operational by fall 2022. Project Thoroughbred also will serve as a hands-on classroom for students studying smart farming at Big Stone Gap’s Mountain Empire Community College.

**About InvestSWVA.** InvestSWVA is a public-private business research, attraction and marketing campaign for Southwest Virginia launched under the umbrella of the Virginia Tobacco Region Revitalization Commission and backed by private industry. InvestSWVA launched Appalachian Grains in 2019. It is now the driving force behind a new specialty grain market in the craft beverage industry for the region's farmers.

**About Michael Waltrip Brewing Company.** Michael Waltrip Brewing Company, founded in 2020, is a premium brewing company that celebrates the enthusiasm and joy of better living of its founder, iconic motor sports champion Michael Waltrip. The company's flagship brand, Two-Time lagers and ales, is the result of Waltrip's quest to create 'better beers' that are easy to drink, approachable, filled with quality ingredients, fabulously refreshing and brewed with craftsmanship. The fun and flavorful collection of beers, aptly named after Waltrip's two-time Daytona 500 victories, features a "Blonde" ale; a coconut India Pale Ale "*Checked Past*," and a Mexican-style lager "*Vamos*." For more information, visit [MichaelWaltripBrewing.com](http://MichaelWaltripBrewing.com). [Follow on social with Facebook @MWBCo; Instagram and Twitter @WaltripBrewing](#)

**About Virginia Department of Energy.** The Virginia Department of Energy manages state-based clean energy policy and deployment initiatives. Virginia Energy serves as the regulatory agency for coal and mineral mining and natural gas production. It hosts Virginia's geologic survey, as well. The agency began administering the Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization (AMLER) program in 2017. The grant is designed to fund projects on historically coal mined land that create economic opportunities for the coal-impacted communities of Southwest Virginia. The agency has received \$10 million annually since 2017. Virginia Energy was created in 1985 as the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy. For more information visit [www.energy.virginia.gov](http://www.energy.virginia.gov), @VAEnergy on [Facebook](#) and @virginia\_energy on [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#). You can also connect with the Virginia Department of Energy on [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).