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Red, white and brew: Pitch for new beer has patriotic flavor, altruistic campaign

FARGO – It may not have been a shot heard 'round the world, but Phil Knutsen's pitch Wednesday for his new Founding Fathers line of beers packed a patriotic punch.

By: **Dave Olson**, INFORUM

- [Phil Knutsen, president and CEO of Founding Fathers Products](#)



Phil Knutsen, president and CEO of Founding Fathers Products, talks Wednesday at the Fargo AmVets Club about the company's line of beers, which are now being marketed around the country. Knutsen said the American-made brews taste great and half the profits from their sale will go to support military troops and their families. Dave Olson / The Forum

- [The Founding Fathers beer](#)

FARGO – It may not have been a shot heard 'round the world, but Phil Knutsen's pitch Wednesday for his new Founding Fathers line of beers packed a patriotic punch.

"It's an American-made product, higher-quality product and one that donates half its profits back to what we felt was aligned with the Founding Fathers," Knutsen said, speaking to a lunch crowd at the AmVets Club in Fargo.

Knutsen, president and CEO of Minnesota-based Founding Fathers, said 50 percent of profits from the sale of the beer will go to groups that support members of the military and their families.

And while veterans are part of the target market the company is aiming to reach, Knutsen made it clear, "We are marketing towards all people who love beer."

Founding Fathers Beer is brewed in three places – LaCrosse, Wis.; Latrobe, Pa., and Memphis, Tenn.

The initial product launch includes 7,500 cases of Founding Fathers Lager that will be distributed in North Dakota and Minnesota this month.

The brand will be in many other states by the end of next year, according to Knutsen, who said eventually three styles will be available: lager, lite and premium.

Susan Farney, manager of the Fargo AmVets Club, said Founding Fathers was selling well Wednesday afternoon.

"Most people said it's good," Farney said.

Knutsen said that while the market for "craft" beer has been strong, the much larger market where foreign-owned premium beers like Budweiser and Miller operate has been stagnant, or falling for many years.

"We decided, why not bring in a beer specifically designed to compete against the largest foreign-owned breweries?" Knutsen said.

He said Founding Fathers is still deciding which nonprofit connected to the military it will support in North Dakota.

In Minnesota, money will go to groups such as Tee it up for the Troops and the Minnesota Military Family Foundation.

Nationally, beer profits will go to the Armed Forces Relief Trust.

"With the stress put on our military over the past few years, I thought it was a great time to start a business and have a great cause our customers can rally around and that is the families of the troops," Knutsen said.