

Bancroft Brewing ready for brewing system



By Bill Kilpatrick

Bancroft This Week sat down with Logan Krupa, the owner and operator of Bancroft Brewing, to see how progress is coming as he moves his operation from the corner of North Hastings Street and Hwy. 28, into the old McCaskie building on main street. Krupa gave Bancroft This Week a sneak peak of some of the décor, some of which remains a secret, as well as a full tour of the building.

When Bancroft This Week last spoke with Krupa in the spring of 2024 he was hoping to have the operations up and running by December, but as with most renovations, Krupa ran into some unexpected problems that had to be dealt with first. While there have been some delays and some frustrations, overall Krupa is happy with how things are progressing and he is excited to be moving into the next phase, where he will begin brewing on-site and designing the cosmetic layout for the restaurant and the bar. "Step one is get the manufacturing going, step two is finishing the restaurant and bar and step three is developing the event space. "It has not been smooth sailing," said Krupa, "but now we're coming into the fun part."

Getting to the "fun part" however, was anything but fun explained Krupa. The first part of the project was to ensure that the infrastructure was in place so that the equipment, including the fermentation tanks, the mill house, the grist case, and all the other equipment needed to brew the beer could be installed. This required putting in appropriate drainage of which there was none, so Krupa had to cut a massive 12-inch trough through a six-inch cement pad and then dig out the packed earth beneath it, all by hand. This process exhausted him both physically and mentally and often had him working until late in the night, but he was determined to get it done.

However, other unexpected problems kept arising. One such problem involved the drainage behind the building where shipping and receiving would be. This required the tearing out of the old cement pad and the laying of a reinforced and heightened concrete pad, not to mention a massively plugged drainpipe that had to be cleared. This had to be done before work could begin on the walk-in cooler, because it had to be able to support heavy equipment required for the cooler completion. "The back side took a long time," explained Krupa pointing to the cooler, "Getting this part done was a lot." The shipping and receiving pad needed to be reinforced with rebar, but now says Krupa it's ready to ship and receive. "The back end took a little longer than we wanted, but we took our time to do it properly," said Krupa adding, "that back end can take a pounding. You'll be able to drive an 18-wheeler on that pad. It will stand the test of time."

The walk-in beer cooler is up and operational, and is massive, measuring between 1,100 and 1,200 square feet and is a space that is

much be needed as the new automated system will be able to produce some 1,500 cans of beer per hour. The brewing system that he ordered has also run into unexpected delays due to the back log of shipping containers on the west coast, but he is hopeful that they will be arriving in the next two weeks.

He is also hopeful that he will be able to get the system up and running quickly, and to ensure that this happens, two of the engineers that designed the system will be coming all the way from China to assemble the complicated system. "There's three full-size shipping containers coming full of equipment. It's going to be all-hands-on-deck," exclaimed Krupa. Setting up the equipment is a daunting task that will involve metal cutters, grinders, two forklifts, a Bob CAT, and rigging equipment to get the tanks erect. "It's not a big system, but it is a very complicated one," stated Krupa.

When asked what the finished product in terms of design will look like, Krupa explained that he was aiming for a "rich, wood pub-ish style that represents Bancroft, not steam-punk, but related to logging with barrels and high-quality chairs. European, but without the brass taps and rails," he said, adding, "This will be a where you want to come and spend time, have a beer, hang out and watch the game."

Despite the setbacks, delays, and late nights Krupa said that if he had to do it all over again he absolutely would. The longer Krupa spends at the new site, the more he is feeling bonded to the building, "I feel like its becoming part of me," he explained, "I'm attached to it. I love it." Krupa explained that he even buried full beer cans under the foundation "for good luck and so the beer gods bless me." And it appears that the beer gods are listening since they have already blessed him with extra help from friends and family who have been there to help out when things went wrong or when he had an emergency. His father Ray has applied his knowledge of real estate and buildings which helped avoid numerous structural problems. His mother Gail has assisted in painting and design and his uncle Robert Tallman is applying his carpentry skills. "I've had a lot of support from friends who have stepped up?They helped me out [when I was] in a Jam, I'm very, very fortunate. I have great friends." stated Krupa.

Krupa said that he is hoping to have the doors open by summer and with any luck, and a little help from the beer gods, it will be.