



Logan Barger, co-founder of Kekionga Cider Company.

Setting Sights On Cider

How does someone who intended to become a professor of religious history find himself—literally, at times—up to his elbows in apples?

A fortuitous confluence of appealing opportunities: working

with friends, being near family and trying out a different career path, explains **Logan Barger**, co-founder of Kekionga Cider Company.

“Tyler and I’ve been friends since Little League,” said Barger of Kekionga co-founder Tyler Butcher.

“We always talked about going into business together and doing something in the alcohol industry because ... well, we enjoy alcohol and it seemed like fun. I’ve always worked in it, actually. I worked at Belmont Beverage while I went to IPFW. In grad

school in Atlanta, I worked for a beer distributor. After my wife and I, and our two little boys, moved back, I was with a wine distributor.”

How did old friends go from talking to doing?

“One day, T said, ‘Wanna make some cider? I have a friend with an apple press.’ We spent the day picking apples with our families and it was a lot of fun. We pressed the apples and made our first batch of cider... It was terrible! Undrinkable. But it was fun, and we decided to keep trying until we got cider that wouldn’t make our families gag,” said Barger.

Eventually, the pair honed their skills and detected a business opportunity. “The craft cider market is

taking off. The popularity of craft beer is turning a lot of people on to cider—it’s a gluten-free option. There’s only one other dedicated cidery in all of Indiana. Now we’re the second.”

They teamed up with other friends, Britton Falkenstern and Don and Greg Goeglien, owners of Goeglien Catering and the Goeglien Mill. The mill and its original apple press date back to 1929. It houses Kekionga’s operations and tasting room—a family-friendly space, selling both fresh-pressed cider (non-alcoholic) for the kids and hard cider for the grown-ups.

Kekionga Cider is on tap at a number of local restaurants. Its bottled ciders are available at S&V Liquors.

Barger explained the artwork on the “Old Bicorn” labels: “A bicorn is an old time military hat—General Wayne wore one. The other cider, Brass Cannon, is from Wayne’s nickname for his favorite gun. Next year, we’ll be naming all the ciders after Fort Wayne historical figures.”

Kekionga? “That’s the Native name for what’s now Fort Wayne. Our logo includes an old map of the area.”

What’s with the historical references? “I’m still a history geek at heart,” said Barger.

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— Beth Behrendt

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