

Jake TeSelle

2016 graduate in Mechanical Engineering
Co-Founder of Crooked Yard Hops

Named Entrepreneur of the Year by Headwaters RC&D



Entrepreneur of the Year

A recent Montana State University graduate has been named Entrepreneur of the Year for the counties served by Headwaters RC&D. Jake TeSelle, who earned a degree in mechanical engineering in 2016 from the MSU College of Engineering, received the award in November at Headwaters RC&D's annual awards event in Butte.

TeSelle and his business partner, Colten Sales, are the founders of Crooked Yard Hops, a specialty operation growing hops for local microbreweries. Crooked Yard began as a one-acre test plot in a back corner of TeSelle's family's farm near Bozeman in spring 2015. That fall, TeSelle and Sales harvested 20 pounds of hops and got a positive response on the samples they gave to local breweries, TeSelle said.

TeSelle and Sales worked with MSU's Blackstone LaunchPad to develop a business plan, create a structure for the business and successfully apply for a grant worth more than \$38,000 through the Montana Department of Agriculture's Growth Through Agriculture program, according to Les Craig, director of the Blackstone LaunchPad at MSU.

Receiving the grant allowed TeSelle and Sales to launch Crooked Yard Hops and purchase a mobile harvester, TeSelle said. He added that he has used his engineering degree to design a hops trellis system that is less top-heavy than more traditional systems and which reduces the risk of being blown over by wind.

"It's very encouraging to know that my dream is succeeding and that I am surrounded by so many fantastic mentors, friends and family who keep me moving onward and upward," he said.



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