

# Signs point to Bardstown getting another distillery

## Vodka company that owns Kentucky Owl considering building in Nelson County

By Randy Patrick

Saturday, September 30, 2017 at 12:20 pm

Bardstown could get its third distillery in three years.

The Kentucky Economic Finance Development Authority reported at its Thursday meeting that SPI Group, which owns Stolichnaya Vodka and earlier this year bought Kentucky Owl Bourbon, is through a subsidiary “considering property in Bardstown to establish a distillery, rickhouses, visitor’s center and other related facilities for the production of bourbon.”

The authority approved \$2 million in state tax incentives if the company should happen to locate those facilities in Kentucky, based on its planned investment of nearly \$150 million.

According to the report, total investment is estimated at \$149,750,000, and would create an estimated 77 jobs with an hourly average wage of \$25.

“We’ve been working with this company since October, and the incentives are only the preliminary approval in case they do come to Bardstown,” Kim Huston, president of the Nelson County Economic Development Agency, said Friday. “We’re still very hopeful this project will come here and that we can make that happen.”

Huston said the company has two years to “go for final approval” of the incentives.

She said she couldn’t say anything about the potential development until the state made it public by giving its preliminary approval to the incentives, nor could she disclose any details beyond what is in the KEFDA report.

“They’ve held this close,” she said of the company, which has its U.S. operations based in New York.

SPI Group of Luxembourg has production facilities in the U.S., Mexico, Argentina, Spain and Latvia. The bourbon distillery proposal is through its subsidiary, Strigiformes LLC.

The Lexington Herald-Leader reported that in January of this year, SPI Group bought Kentucky Owl Bourbon for an undisclosed amount, and that the brand had been revived in 2014 by the Dedman family of Mercer County, owners of Harrodsburg’s Beaumont Inn. The family, according to the newspaper, produced Kentucky Owl from 1879 until Prohibition.

The Stoli Group’s brands include, besides Stolichnaya Vodka, Elit Vodka, Bayou Rum and KAH Tequila.