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Sazerac plans to invest more than $600 million in four Kentucky distilling projects

State officials approved $5.6 million in tax incentives for expansions in Garrard, Franklin, Daviess and Laurel counties

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Sazerac plans to invest more than $600 million across four Kentucky sites, a move that would expand production, bottling and barrel-making capacity for one of the state’s largest spirits companies.

The company outlined the projects on Oct. 29 during the monthly meeting of the Kentucky Economic Development Finance Authority, or KEDFA. State officials approved about $5.6 million in tax incentives tied to the investments, according to meeting materials. The largest project is in Garrard County, with additional spending planned in Franklin, Daviess and Laurel counties.

The company, which is co-headquartered in Louisville and New Orleans and owns brands including Buffalo Trace, did not immediately comment publicly on the full investment package, according to the Louisville Courier Journal.

The biggest share of the spending, about $557 million, is slated for a distilling site in Lancaster in Garrard County. Sazerac bought the shuttered facility in August for $20 million as part of a broader effort to add production capacity. The property, known as Garrard County Distilling, sits on about 210 acres and includes two 20,000-square-foot barrel warehouses.

According to a KEDFA report, Sazerac plans a broad capital program at that site to upgrade operations for expected future growth. The project includes about $496 million in building improvements and another $61 million for land and equipment. State officials approved nearly $2.8 million in tax incentives for the project. It is expected to create 85 jobs over 15 years, with a target hourly wage of $39.

The Lancaster facility opened in 2024 and closed in early 2025 after financial problems. When Sazerac announced the acquisition in August, President and Chief Executive Officer Jake Wenz said the company still needed more supply to keep up with demand even after earlier expansion work, and that the site would add valuable distilling capacity.

In Franklin County, Sazerac plans to invest about $29.4 million at Buffalo Trace Distillery in Frankfort, the company’s flagship Kentucky operation. KEDFA documents say the project will create a new craft bottling operation as the brand expands in response to stronger demand and expected future growth. More than $20 million of the spending is set aside for building improvements.

That project is expected to create 40 jobs over 10 years, with a target average hourly wage of $50. It received $700,000 in approved state tax incentives.

The new Buffalo Trace spending follows the completion in 2025 of a separate 10-year, $1.2 billion expansion at the distillery. That earlier project added production and warehousing capacity, expanded visitor offerings and supported new product releases.

In Daviess County, Sazerac plans to spend about $17.5 million at Glenmore Distillery in Owensboro. According to KEDFA, the money will go toward safety improvements and steps to increase operating efficiency to prepare for future growth. The state approved about $1.01 million in tax incentives for that project.

The Glenmore investment is expected to create 50 jobs over 10 years, with a target average hourly wage of $44. Sazerac acquired the distillery in 2009 when it bought the site from Constellation Brands. More recently, the company revived the Glenmore Distillery name with the launch of two whiskey products.

The fourth project is a $2.1 million expansion at Cumberland Cooperage in Laurel County. The facility makes wooden barrels for the distilling industry, and Sazerac plans to upgrade facilities and equipment there as it prepares for future growth. KEDFA approved about $1.05 million in tax incentives for the project. It is expected to create 75 jobs over seven years, with a target average hourly wage of $36.

Taken together, the four projects point to continued heavy investment in Kentucky’s bourbon and whiskey infrastructure. Beyond the immediate construction and hiring plans, a larger production footprint and added cooperage capacity could ripple through the broader beverage business by increasing demand for suppliers, packaging and logistics while also sharpening competition among spirits producers seeking to meet long-term consumer demand.

The expansion plans also reinforce Kentucky’s central role in the U.S. distilling industry. Sazerac’s proposed spending covers nearly every major part of the supply chain, from distillation and warehousing to bottling and barrel production, and it comes as large producers continue to position themselves for growth years before spirits reach store shelves.