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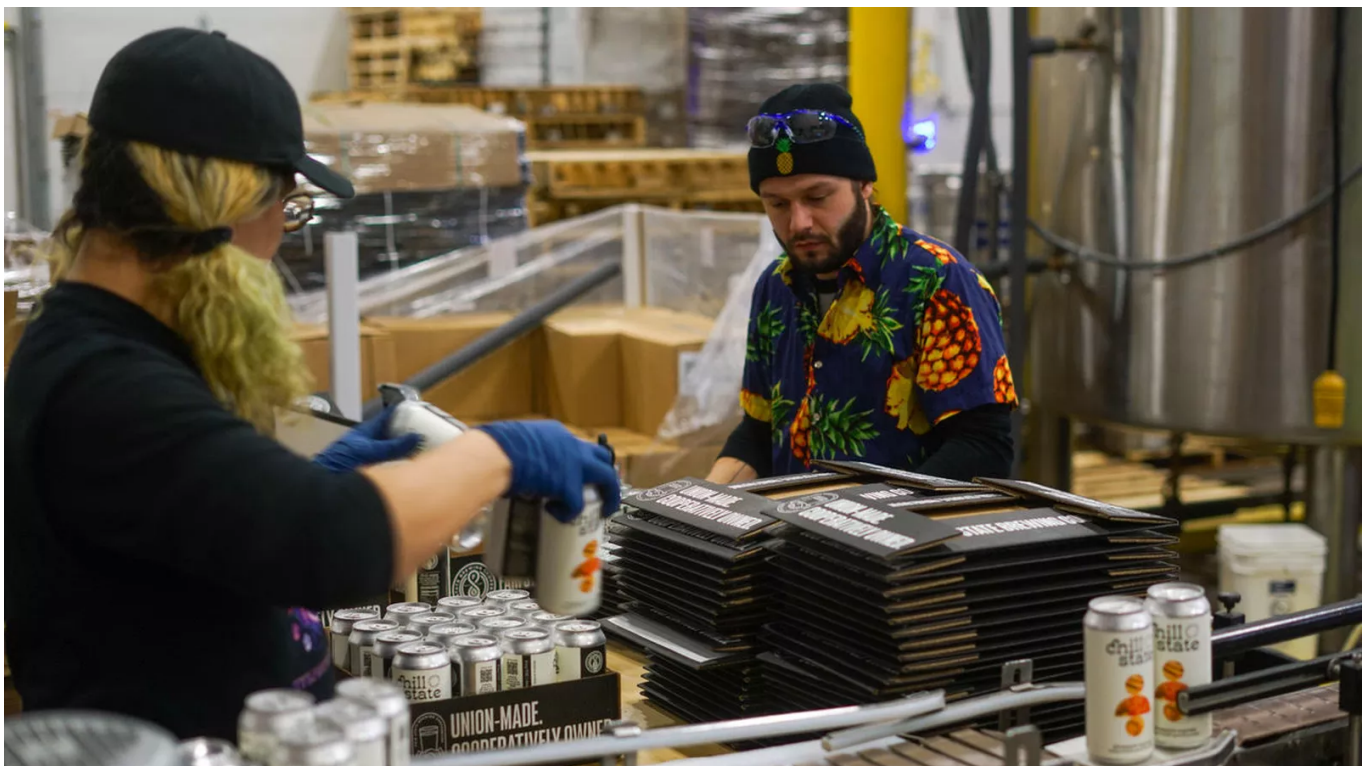
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Inside Chill State Collective, Minnesota's first all-in-one THC drink distributor



Audrey Kennedy



Chill State partners with brands and produces its own drinks. Photo: Chill State Collective

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hemp-derived THC beverages.

State of play: The collective, started late last year by the folks behind cooperative brewing company [Fair State](#), partners with brands across the country to co-pack, store and distribute their drinks here in Minnesota.

- As of mid-January, Chill State was producing around 30,000 drinks per day.

Why it matters: We're the [Wild West of THC products](#) right now. The collective has only taken on six partners so far, but program director Rob Shellman said they've been inundated with requests from brands — showing that national companies want to establish a Minnesota presence ASAP.

Driving the news: The folks at Chill State invited me to their St. Paul facility for a behind-the-scenes look at how they make their hemp-derived THC beverage Pineapple Express.

What I found: Other than the thousands of drinks stacked on pallets, Chill State looks like every other brewing facility. It shares space with Fair State's operation, so the place has that yeasty taproom smell.

Details: Pineapple Express has three main ingredients, head brewer Joe Wells explained:

- Terpenes, a lab-synthesized ingredient Chill State adds for a weed-like flavor and aroma.
- THC emulsion sourced from local and national hemp farmers, which gives the drink its psychoactive effects.
- The drink's seltzer base, created in-house alongside their other brews.

A single 20-liter (just over 5 gallons) jug of THC emulsion — a liquid the color of milk but slightly more viscous — can make thousands of 5-milligram drinks, Wells

legal states when it comes to THC products, producers are still required to test their products before sale.

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- Chill State uses several independent labs to check for potency and consistency of batches, Fair State CEO Evan Sallee told me.

Finally, the drinks are packaged (check out [a video on our Instagram](#)) and delivered to Fair State's taproom and other buyers — from breweries to hair salons.

Yes, but: That business model might not continue. Buried in the [proposed legalization bill](#) are laws barring businesses from obtaining manufacturing *and* retail licenses. That means Fair State could make its drinks but couldn't legally sell them in its own taproom.

What we're watching: Chill State doesn't plan to slow down, but as work on legalization continues, the team hopes any bill will protect breweries' existing and future operations.

- "I'd argue there's nobody better in the state to produce a safe product to consume than people who already produce safe beverages every single day," Wells said.



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