

April 26, 2022

Open Rates Way Up But No. of Taps Down, Volume Soft in Latest from BeerBoard

One of the themes of the last several earnings calls and trends roundups has been the “return” of the on-premise – but of course with less total retail outlets than before, as many have permanently closed.

Accordingly, BeerBoard has just released its latest On-Premise Status Report, charting the weekend of April 21-24, compared to their two prior reports (April 7-10 and March 24-27, so it’s a sequential comparison here).

One highlight? The “open rate” metric – charting locations open and pouring beer – reached an all-time high of 97%. That’s “the highest average since we started tracking this data back in May of 2020,” per report. In fact, they’re doing away with reporting this metric, unless there are giant fluctuations worth reporting as needed.

But on the other hand, the average number of taps fell to 19 per location nationally, “after three consecutive periods at 20.” The 19 taps showing is in fact up 5.6% the same weekend in 2021 (which saw 18 average taps) – but down by about 50% over the same weekend in 2019 (when there were 38 taps per location nationally). Less taps seem to be a bit of a new normal.

Then, too, percentage of taps pouring fell for the second consecutive period, “dropping back one point to 73%,” from 74% the prior tracked weekend. “Eight of the 11 states tracked were down, while Michigan, Minnesota and Nevada all held firm on the weekend,” per report.

Indeed, volumes here were a little soft – at least compared to prior periods, though up slightly from same weekend in 2021. Volume change per location was down 6.4% nationally weekend of April 21 vs. weekend of April 7, but up 3% vs. same weekend 2021. But that also comes off a 3.5% decline that the weekend of April 7 saw vs. the prior period.

In all, on-premise’s “comeback” is marked by fits and starts amid a wobbly labor pool, more COVID news, and less overall retail outposts. Stay tuned.