
TRANSCRIPT: “The TTB Story”

The history of taxation and regulatory control on the alcohol and tobacco industries is as old as our nation itself. Since 1789, the United States Treasury Department and its Bureaus have played an integral role in writing its history and in defining our nation's identity. The Department's work with the alcohol and tobacco industries has been carried out by numerous agencies under just as many names, but those individuals serving to uphold the government's interests share in more than two centuries of dedicated service to the American people.

Today, the Department's work with the alcohol and tobacco industries is carried out by the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, or TTB. TTB was created in January of 2003, when the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, or ATF, was extensively reorganized under the provisions of the Homeland Security Act of 2002. The Act called for the tax collection functions to remain with the Department of the Treasury, and TTB was born.

TTB’s mission is simple... to collect alcohol, tobacco, firearms, and ammunition excise taxes; to ensure that these products are labeled, advertised, and marketed in accordance with the law; and to administer the laws and regulations in a manner that protects the consumer and the revenue, and promotes voluntary compliance from industry members. And while TTB is the newest bureau under the Department, the roots of its vision and mission date back to the creation of the Treasury Department and the first Federal taxes levied on distilled spirits in 1791.

As such, TTB builds upon a rich history, one that is marked with accomplishment and success. After all, it was a Treasury agency that collected the first source of tax income for our new Republic: an excise tax on distilled spirits. These taxes, as called for by Alexander Hamilton, paid off our nation's debt in the Revolutionary War. It was the Treasury Department that found itself in the middle of the Whiskey Rebellion, an event that would later come to stand as the first true test of our Federal government's legitimacy.

Later, Treasury collected taxes and issued stamps for alcohol and tobacco products in order to finance the Civil War. And during the early part of the twentieth century, the Treasury Department enforced the Eighteenth Amendment, and through the work of agents like Eliot Ness, leader of “The Untouchables,” brought to justice those who used the illegal liquor industry to finance organized crime.

Today, TTB employs some 600 people across the country, including our Headquarters Offices in Washington, D.C., and the National Revenue Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. Our staff are highly educated and technically trained; more than half are analysts, chemists, investigators and auditors. In addition, a large number of employees serve as financial, legal, information management, and computer specialists.

Today, TTB has reinvigorated its mission of collecting the revenue and protecting the public through modernized services and e-government initiatives. In the field, and here at headquarters, TTB employees put innovation into practice to more efficiently verify a proper payment of alcohol, tobacco, firearms, and ammunition excise taxes, to prevent misleading labeling and advertising, to promote prosperity and stability within our regulated industry, and to ensure that our workforce, technology, and business practices meet the nation's needs efficiently and effectively. The implementation of an all-electronic system for processing beer, wine and spirits labels has drastically reduced the time and cost associated with filing paper label applications, and serves to illustrate that TTB is more capable than ever of mobilizing its strengths and transforming its purposes into a truly distinctive, intensely engaged and service-oriented agency.

Today, as throughout Treasury's history, the staff of the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau forge a path that distinguishes itself by its efficiency and the creation of new and lasting partnerships with industry stakeholders, their representatives, interested advocacy groups, and the American public.

Today, TTB continues to capitalize on its traditions while looking forward to building new ones in service to America and its people.

TTB. A proud past... a focused future.

VISION:

Our vision is to be an organization of people who value each other and who treat each other and their customers with the respect that they deserve.

TTB intends to uphold the laws, for which TTB is responsible, in a fair and practical way, affording all an opportunity to have public opinions heard without prejudice.

TTB intends to carry out its missions without imposing inappropriate or undue burden on those from which TTB collects taxes and those TTB regulates.

Produced by the TTB Knowledge Management Staff in cooperation with many other TTB employees.