



Heartland Science



Ohio's Legacy of Discovery & Innovation



Manufacturing

From Price Tags to Process Control

Pop-Top Cans

Ermal Frazee, founder of the Dayton Reliable Tool & Mfg. Co. in the early 1960s invented the pop-top beverage can, which opens with the pull of a tab. Legend has it that Frazee started research on an easy-open can after being caught at a picnic without a can opener, and struggling to open cans on his car bumper.



In the late 1940's Frazee had founded Dayton Reliable Tool & Mfg. Co. (now DRT Manufacturing Company) as manufacturer of tool and die components. His understanding of materials helped him solve the pull-tab challenge. He knew he had to design a top that was easy to open, yet strong enough to contain a product under pressure during shipping. He decided to use the lid itself to form a rivet that would hold the tab in place until a customer wanted to remove it. Iron City Brewing in Pittsburgh was the first to incorporate the new tops. They tested them in 1962 with great success. Frazee's design truly revolutionized the beer and soft drink industries.



Some design changes were made to increase safety though -- some of the first lids were very sharp, resulting in cut fingers and lips. And, some consumers needed a little instruction on how to open the new pop tops, so the words "Lift Tab, Pull Open" were added to some tops.

Did You Know?

- The beer can was invented by John Leon Bennett, born August 11, 1874, in Newark, OH.
- Kettering's Frazee Pavilion is an amphitheater that was named for the pop tab inventor.

Find out more...

- [DRT Manufacturing Company](http://www.drtusa.com)
(www.drtusa.com)
- [Rusty Cans Profile: "Zips Tops - The First Pull Tabs"](http://www.rustycans.com/zips.html)
(www.rustycans.com/zips.html)