

Contract

Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers' Association (NWGGA) Passport Wine Tour - #18-13-057

Grant Amount

\$2,000

Contact

Jim Ballard, James Arthur Vineyards, (402) 783-5255, javwines@windstream.net
Mick McDowell, Mileta Vista Winery, (308) 754-4416, mick@milettavistawinery.com
Lory Cappel, (308) 345-4032, lory_cappel@yahoo.com

Issue of Interest

A need was identified to begin a marketing effort to promote the grape and wine industry in Nebraska. The Marketing Committee of the NWGGA, led by Lory Cappel, determined that they would mirror successful Passport Programs of other states to increase the profile of the industry. It was discovered that several surrounding states had found great success in using the terminology, "Passport," to solicit new visitors to wineries and tasting rooms to learn more about wines and the state's production. Such a promotional effort is needed to sustain continued growth of the grape and wine industry in Nebraska.

Approach to Problem

The \$2,000 allocation was used to work with the NWGGA Marketing Committee and Idea Bank Marketing Group of Hastings to develop the Passport Wine Tour Program. The concern of how to promote Nebraska wines and the Passport Program was considered. It was concluded that an incentive program would garner the greatest degree of public interest. Those who joined the wine tour and returned their Passports would be entered into a drawing. A high profile figure (Governor Heineman was selected) would draw Passports and announce the winners. Rewards included a stay at a bed and breakfast, dinner for two, a mixed case of Nebraska wines, and a wine gift basket.

Goals/Achievement of Goals

The goal of the NWGGA, with this program, was to entice more consumers to buy Nebraska wines and increase tourism to Nebraska wineries. The approach of this project served to accomplish this by raising the profile and overall image of the industry.

Results, Conclusions, Lessons Learned

The goal of promoting this program into a successful marketing campaign came to fruition in 2008. The advertisement campaign attracted wine tasters from across the state to individual wineries and tasting rooms. By the conclusion of the 2008 Passport Wine Tour, 118 Passports had been entered into the drawing. Governor Heineman agreed to select the winners from the drawing and the NWGGA awarded \$50 and \$75 to 87 and 9 participants, respectively. Participants who visited at least 15 wineries in the program received \$50, while those visiting all 23 locations received \$75.

Progress According to Outcome Measures

The Marketing Committee and Executive Board of the NWGGA concluded that the program was popular in its first year, but greater promotion of the Program was needed. While word of mouth was successful, a more comprehensive and planned marketing approach will be needed to improve the 2009 program. Passport brochures are expensive and many brochures were left unused at wineries. Given this observation, better organization of marketing and distribution of the printed materials are necessary. In an effort to address this problem, a list of participants

should be maintained. This would enable the NWGGA to reach out to past participants to enable greater success in the 2009 Passport Program. The coordination efforts of the newly hired Executive Director and Marketing Committee will be critical to future efforts. The 2008 Passport Program was deemed to be quite popular. At this time, organization and increased marketing efforts are most needed.