NGWB GRANT FINAL REPORT

Contract Number: (The First Amendment to): 18-13-261

Contact Information:

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Issue of Interest:

The 2015 VitiNord International Viticulture & Enology Conference was held at the Lied Lodge & Conference Center in Nebraska City, Nebraska, USA. VitiNord is a conference that happens every three years with the location alternating between North America and Europe.  This conference focuses on research and practices being used in Northern wine growing climates.  Speakers from around the globe shared strategies and information that you can use in your own vineyard and or winery. The mission of VitiNord 2015 is to promote the advancement of viticulture and enology in northern environments that are characterized by cool or short summers and/or cold winters. The IANV successfully organized an international​l symposium in 2006 in Riga, Latvia; 2009 Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec; 2012 Neubrandenburg, Germany.

This project developed a partnership among the Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Association, Nebraska Grape and Winery Board, Nebraska Department of Agriculture, University of Nebraska – Lincoln Department of Agronomy and Horticulture, University of Nebraska-Lincoln Viticulture Program and Nebraska Tourism Commission in order to host the International Association for Northern Viticulture’s (IANV) cold climate conference. This conference, entitled “VitiNord” brought the world of viticulture to Nebraska. Two hundred twenty eight (228) researchers, viticulturists, wine industry supporters from all around the world descended upon Nebraska for several days of sharing best practices to greatly enhance the state of the industry and bring world attention to not only the industry worldwide, but specifically, to the developing prominence and industry leadership emanating from Nebraska. The purpose of this project was two-fold. The first was the promotion and development regarding global collaborative research in the area of viticulture in northern environments, and the second the promotion of Nebraska’s tourism industry by hosting the 2015 VitiNord Conference.

Approach to the Problem:

1. Host a second Conference Planning Committee (CPC) on-site meeting in Nebraska City, Nebraska, November 21 – 23, 2014. Details of the conference were finalized, which included, but was not limited to, developing a conference evaluation rating scale, identifying speakers, organizing the trade show format, setting up facility rental and meeting spaces, coordinating attendee registrations, reviewing and discussing social program activities, addressing the conference’s scientific program content, and identifying future promotional events and efforts.
2. Develop marketing materials and outreach activities associated with the promotion of the VitiNord Conference.

Goals/Achievement of Goals:

1. To conduct a 2015 VitiNord International Cold Climate Conference Planning Committee meting at the Lied Lodge and Conference Center in Nebraska City, Nebraska.
2. The goal of this meeting (which was held November 21-23, 2014) was to design the conference program, select speakers, set up the online registration form, organize and confirm on-site arrangements, and finalize other details that are associated with hosting the Conference.
3. Promote VitiNord 2015 conference.

Results, Conclusions, Lessons Learned:

Goals #1 & 2:

The second on-site meeting of the Conference Planning Committee (CPC) was held in Nebraska City, NE on November 21-23, 2014. All CPC members were in attendance for the meeting (see Attachment A). A comprehensive and ambitious agenda was used to guide the furthering of the planning for all conference components listed above (see Attachment B). With less than 12 months until the conference itself, final year planning details were identified for each conference component to be addressed and reported back to the CPC as a whole via emails, phone conferences and videoconference meetings leading up to VitiNord 2015. The holding of this, the second face-to-face meeting of the CPC on-site in Nebraska City proved to be invaluable. To be on-site during the time of the year the VitiNord conference was actually scheduled to be held one year later enabled the CPC to evaluate how the logistics/traveling/shuttling of participants, etc. might be expected to occur one year hence. Additionally, this comprehensive meeting enabled the CPC to literally walk through every component and detail of the conference, room-by-room, session-by-session, and day-by-day. Such detailed planning was essential for the success of a conference of this scope and magnitude.

Goal #3:

1. The Conference Planning Committee engaged in outreach activities and create marketing materials which included, but were not limited to, booth registrations at various agriculture-related events, travel cost reimbursement to grape and/or wine members for attending the events, shirts, brochures, conference forms, website design and/or maintenance, social media activity and/or tracking, and other materials and activities directly associated with the promotion of this worldwide conference (see Attachment C).

Progress Achieved According to Outcome Measures:

Mac’s Creek Vineyards and Winery continued to provide oversight for the execution of the entire project. Mac’s Creek personnel served in roles of Conference Planning Committee Chairperson, Marketing and Communications Chairperson, and Exhibitors and Tradeshow Chairperson.

IANV provided expertise and experience from previous VitiNord Conferences. Three original IANV/VitiNord “Founding Fathers” serve on the CPC. One was the Scientific Program Chairperson and the other two co-chaired the Promotion Committee.

Below are additional project partners who have come forward to support this project:

* Nebraska Winery and Grape Growers Association – Executive Director is CPC member; 25 NWGGA members served as volunteers; NWGGA was financial sponsor
* Nebraska Tourism Commission – served on CPC committee, “in-kind” sponsorship to provide marketing materials, touring buses;
* Nebraska Grape Wine Board – multiple members on CPC; financial sponsor
* University of Nebraska Department of Agronomy and Horticulture – assisted with Poster Sessions, organized selection of Nebraska wines to feature at conference
* Department of Agriculture- served as member of CPC

The partnerships of the International Association of Northern Viticulture (IANV), aka VitiNord, collaborated to address the stated goals by focusing on the specific conference objectives:

1. Disseminate information about the successful pursuit of northern viticulture to a wide audience;
2. Bring together enthusiasts, grape breeders and researchers to share viticulture knowledge across international boundaries through conferences, printed literature, or electronic exchange;
3. Initiate and support research and investigations that will lead to greater success and opportunities for northern viticulture;
4. Work to expand the opportunities for northern viticulture as a hobby or commerce by stimulating research and exchange of information about the use of northern grapes in winemaking, fresh consumption, and other uses;
5. Significantly heighten the awareness of the grape and wine industry in Nebraska and the state’s national and world leadership prominence in the advancement and sustainability of the cold climate grape and wine industry.

Financial Report:

This project was successfully completed within the parameters of the originally proposed budget: ($10,000), i.e., Conference Planning Committee meeting costs (paid to hotel) = $3551.36; Travel (for CPC members traveling from out-of-state and out-of-country) = $1182.56; Conference Promotions = $4985.60; TOTAL PROJECT COST = $9719.52

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