

NGWB Grant Final Report (FY20-21)

Contract #18-13-333 - NWGGA – TOAST Nebraska

Grant Amount \$103,500

Contact Information

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Issue of Interest

The Nebraska Winery and Grape Grow industry in the state of Nebraska continues to need to market directly to Nebraska consumers. Many Nebraska consumers are still not aware of the fact that grapes not only grow but thrive in Nebraska and that award-winning wines are being produced and enjoyed in the state. By promoting the industry as a category, we will strive to introduce consumers to wines and the events and activities of wineries and vineyards as a tourism attraction. Toast Nebraska helps encourage increased recognition and demand of Nebraska wine and grape related products. It allows each individual winery to brand themselves in their own tent to give guests a “taste” of what it would be like to visit their winery and it also allows the industry to market all Nebraska Wines which can increase demand and consumption of Nebraska Wines. The Nebraska Winery & Grape Growers Association continued to promote the industry by marketing to consumers by hosting the annual event Toast Nebraska.

Approach to Problem

The grant allowed for the following:

- Provided funding to promote the Toast Nebraska Wine Festival for a spring 2021 event
- Provide one central location where attendees can taste various Nebraska Wines and encourage individuals to purchase Nebraska Wines during the event

Goals/Achievement of Goals

The 2021 TOAST Nebraska Wine Festival was extremely successful. Hosted on May 14-15, 2021 at Stinson Park in Aksarben Village in Omaha, the festival welcomed 3,027 attendees and 206 winery employees, volunteers, and event staff. The centrally located park allowed for great foot traffic, day of marketing, as well as free parking, nearby hotels, and lots of attractions within walking distance – a must for an alcohol focused event. Marketing was launched in late March through April and efforts needed to be slowed due to such a great response and a ticket cap of 3,000 people due to COVID venue capacity needs. Overall general marketing efforts had a reach of over 1.5 million Nebraskans and Midwesterners increasing not only the opportunity for ticket sales but industry recognition as well. NWGGA partnered with 26 food vendors and artisans to offer snacks, meals, and shopping to event attendees. There were multiple bands throughout each day as well as wine education sessions and a new crowd favorite – wine bingo.

Results, Conclusions, Lessons Learned

The overall event was extremely successful. The NWGGA is the the throws of planning a holiday festival hosted at Fonner Park in Grand Island. In a little over a month's time, there have been over 600 tickets sold to that event in a new central-Nebraska market. The TOAST event is a great tool to promote and impact the Nebraska wine industry and we hope to continue to host more great TOAST events in the future. The TOAST Nebraska spring event was awarded 2021 Best Festival by Omaha's Choice awards and second runner-up in the 2021 Outstanding Event Award category for the Nebraska Tourism Awards.

Progress Achieved According to Outcome Measures

In comparison to the most recent 2019 festival at Vala's Pumpkin Patch in Gretna:

Attendees - 213% increase	2019: 1,420	2021: 3,072
Average Ticket Price Sold - 134% increase	2019: \$29.16	2021: \$39.04
Wineries and Vendors Attended - 167% increase	2019: 27	2021: 45
Marketing Dollars Spent – 18.5% increase	2019: \$19,572	2021: \$15,938
Timeline to Sellout – 86% decrease	2019: 10 month timeline, did not sell out	2021: 6 weeks

These metrics were based off of the most available data from the 2019 festival hosted through a different event planning team. With a new event planning team and committee in place, the strategies for 2021 resulted in over double the amount of tickets sold, at a higher price (better consumer-perceived value of the industry), in less time (consumer urgency to attend), with less marketing dollars (the ability to invest more in the event experience and overall event quality). With the average population of Omaha being 475k, approximately 0.6% of the Omaha metro area attended the event. Applying these same metrics to the Grand Island event that is currently being marketed for November 2021, we've already reached almost double that ratio at 1.1%. TOAST Nebraska is gaining momentum within the state and becoming the premier event to feature all that Nebraska wine has to offer.