

# NGWB Grant Final Report (FY18-19)

**Contract** #18-13-333 NWGGA Toast Nebraska Grant

**Grant Amount** \$20,000

## Contact Information

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## Issue of Interest

The Nebraska Winery and Grape Growing industry in the state of Nebraska continues to be a under promoted industry. 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. The Nebraska Winery & Grape Growers Association continued to promote the industry by continuously promoting Nebraska wines to Nebraska consumers.

## Approach to Problem

This grant allowed for the following:

- Provided funding to promote the Toast Nebraska Wine Festival held at Vala's Pumpkin Patch in Gretna, Nebraska
- Provide one central location where attendees can taste various Nebraska Wines and encourage individuals to purchase Nebraska Wines after the event

## Goals/Achievement of Goals

Toast Nebraska was another way that the Association was able to drive consumers to try Nebraska Wines. The total number of attendees for 2019 was 1,964. Of those 1,964, a total of 1,776 were paid attendees. The remaining "unpaid attendees" were vendors, wineries, volunteers and staff who assisted in creating a positive, fun atmosphere for those purchasing tickets to the event. A total of 423 tickets were sold via Groupon which helped to inform more of the public about the Toast Nebraska event. This is an increase from a total of 970 paid attendees in 2018. A wine tote and glass were provided to each attendee. The ticket sales were \$63,647, vendor sales were \$2,900 and two sponsors with a total of \$7,500 in support.

Toast Committee Members were Jim Ballard, Richard Hilske, Jennifer Reeder, Casey Ryan and Al Vybiral. It is important to have a strong committee to plan the event and the NWGGA appreciates the time spent by these individuals in the industry. With industry support, we are able to increase awareness and interest about Nebraska wines and allow an event where individuals can taste various wines in one central location.

## **Results, Conclusions, Lessons Learned**

The feedback from attendees participating in the survey was generally positive with an 88% stated satisfied. A total of 194 participated in the survey. The lessons learned were that wineries needed to bring more wine as many wineries ran out of wine early and the number of ticket sold will need to be provided earlier to wineries participating so they can plan accordingly.

More workers needed at each winery tent to speed up the “service” to attendees and offer more support to wineries upon arrival to set up their sales area. Adjustment of hours so attendees are not at the event when it is getting dark and Vala’s needs to be informed that more food is needed.

More volunteers are needed as there was a long line for individuals arriving at the event and Vala’s staff was required to assist. Wine totes need to be purchased further in advance so no shipping costs are incurred.

Overall, it was a very successful event with 2020 staff members aware of the issues experienced in 2019.

## **Progress Achieved According to Outcome Measures**

Participation in the event was very successful and many attendees stated they are excited to attend in 2020.

## **Financial Report**

The total grant amount was \$20,000. Total expenditures in the amount of \$19,972.34 were used expenditures associated with conducting the event successfully. The Toast Nebraska website was a critical element to the successful outcome of the 2019 event.