

AZ WINE

Lifestyle

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of Wine**
*Southwest
Wine Center*

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The School of

Southwest Wine Center



Wine

teaches the craft



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The Verde Valley is being transformed. A young, vibrant wine industry, built on the area's rich farming heritage, is revitalizing the local economy. Vineyards, wineries and tasting rooms, scattered throughout the region, are adding jobs while creating new opportunities for wine-related support businesses. Increased tourism to an area already known for its natural beauty and cultural attractions is being fueled by the unique experiences found at local vineyards and tasting rooms.

Creating a Wine Education Center for Arizona

At the center of this movement to strengthen and transform Arizona's rural economy by building on the momentum of the emerging wine industry is Yavapai College.

Yavapai College, along with the Verde Valley Wine Consortium, the Arizona Wine Growers Association, the University of Arizona and its many partners, has created a plan that will establish all of the components needed to support the thriving new industry. This vision includes establishing the Southwest Wine Center at Yavapai College. The Wine Center, located on the Verde Valley campus in Clarkdale, AZ, will be the primary academic and training center supporting wine growers throughout the southwest United States.

Academic Programs

The Southwest Wine Center at Yavapai College will provide high-quality technical training in viticulture (grape growing) and enology (winemaking) that will ensure that local growers have the trained workforce they need. The one-year Certificate in Viticulture has been offered since 2009, with the Associate of Applied Science in Viticulture and Enology launched in the Fall 2012. Non-credit community education and lifelong learning opportunities in wine appreciation will further enhance and encourage the region's residents to participate in wine education activities.

Student-run Vineyard

A 17-acre vineyard, planted in the foothills of Mingus Mountain on Yavapai College's Verde Valley campus, will provide students with hands-on real world, scientific experience in vineyard establishment and management including, plant science, water management, vine selection, land preparation, and planting and harvesting the grapes.

A Low Impact Teaching Winery

With an eye toward creating a low impact 'classroom' for students, the winery was constructed from an underused racquetball court on campus using existing walls to accommodate the production area, barrel and case storage areas, as well as a public wine tasting room (not yet open). Shaded translucent clerestory windows were added to bring outside light into the inner space which allows the winery to function during daylight hours without the need for artificial lighting. The existing 12-inch thick masonry walls contribute to a building design that uses 50 percent less power per square foot than a standard Arizona home.

The roof is 2.5 times the size of the building, creating a covered, shaded outdoor area for grape staging, weighing and crushing. Rainwater collected on the oversized roof and stored in two freestanding tanks will allow the building to eventually be Net Zero for water usage. Future plans call for photovoltaic solar cells, placed on a shade structure over the wine center parking area, that will generate sufficient power to make the building Net Zero for electricity.

Students will learn the concepts of producing wine at the state-of-the-art teaching winery. The winery has production areas and barrel and case storage to support production of 3,000 cases of wine per year. Students will gain experience in the marketing and business aspects of the wine industry by working in the tasting room with its adjoining trellis-covered tasting patio.

Knowledge Gateway and Repository

The Southwest Wine Center at Yavapai College, in collaboration with the University of Arizona, will serve as a catalyst for knowledge discovery and information sharing. The U of A will work with YC to manage a knowledge gateway and repository that will make historical data about Arizona

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land, soil and water use, as well as new information about grape growing and winemaking in the desert Southwest accessible to the public. The gateway will provide a portal to research, articles, books, videos and websites in digital format, as well as to archived information.

Business Linkages

Through Yavapai College's Regional Economic Development Center (REDC) the Southwest Wine Center will create opportunities for industry collaboration and information-sharing that supports the economic development of the wine industry in the Verde Valley. It will foster entrepreneurship and serve as a clearinghouse for linking new businesses to the resources needed for success. Social networks created through the Center will facilitate the transfer of knowledge about techniques, emerging technologies, and market trends among industry partners. It will also provide the mechanism to allow newcomers to enter the industry and make connections with local producers.

Why Create a Wine Education Center at Yavapai College?

Training a New Workforce

For more than 45 years Yavapai College has been providing workplace training and degree programs for the community. The Southwest Wine Center at Yavapai College will provide wine growers with the trained workers they need for their

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industry to grow and thrive. Industry partners will be involved in planning and teaching meaningful courses. Residents will have access to local training that leads to a rewarding career in their own community.

Hands-On Experience

Textbook theory and concepts are important, but the best way to prepare a workforce for entry into a new industry is provide hands-on experiences as a critical part of learning, career exploration and skill building. Located on the Verde Valley campus, the student-run vineyard and teaching winery both serve as teaching labs that provide students with real world experience that cannot be duplicated in a classroom setting alone. Students will also gain business experience through marketing and sales of Yavapai College-labeled wine in the teaching winery's own tasting room.

Good for the Environment

The newness of the wine industry in Arizona provides ideal conditions for modeling an innovative farming paradigm – one that is environmentally sound and resource-conserving. With more Arizona land being converted to grape growing each season, Southwest Wine Center programs will identify and promote best arid region growing practices and demonstrate the



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importance of low impact solutions to conserving precious natural resources.

As an example, in collaboration with the City of Cottonwood, a 5,150 foot, eight-inch water line is bringing reclaimed wastewater from the City's wastewater treatment plant to the campus vineyard site. The wastewater is grade A+ reclaimed water and will provide irrigation to the 17-acre campus vineyard.

Knowledge Discovery

Most of the grapes in Arizona are grown between 2,500 and 5,000 feet in elevation in a climate similar to that of the Rhone Valley in southern France with the top five varieties in terms of acreage being Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Grenache, Zinfandel, and Merlot. Though grapes have been grown in Arizona for hundreds of years, the commercial wine industry is very young. While off to a great start, there is still much to learn about practices that capitalize upon, and sustain, our unique environment. Faculty and staff at the Southwest Wine Center at Yavapai College will work with area vintners and growers to advance our understanding of best practices for growing grapes in the desert southwest.

Economic Impact

Wine – A New Economic Engine for the Region

Washington State serves as a benchmark for the substantial economic impact made possible by wine industry growth. Today, in Washington, the wine industry attracts over two million annual visitors and has a total economic impact on the state of over \$3 billion. This is Arizona's potential.

Arizona has three major growing regions: southern Arizona in the Sonoita/Elgin area, the Willcox area in Cochise County and the Verde Valley region. Grape growing is also scattered in other areas such as Kingman, Benson, Payson and Portal. In an area that has experienced some of the most difficult economic conditions in decades, the Arizona wine industry holds the promise of significant and sustainable growth. Changes to state law in 2006 provided the first opportunity for the wine industry to provide major economic impact.

As reported by the USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service in 2014, there were 65 vineyards and more than 90 wineries and tasting rooms operating throughout Arizona. Vineyard operators planted a total of 950 acres in 2013 with the value of grapes grown totaling \$2.2 Million. A majority of growers intend to expand operations in the next three years. By the end of 2016, an additional 350 acres are planned. If realized, acres planted would total 1,300 statewide.

The estimated direct economic impact of Verde Valley wineries, vineyards, and tasting rooms alone in 2009-2010 was \$5.5 million and the total of all economic activity in Arizona related to Verde Valley wine is estimated to be almost \$25 million.*

Rural Economic Development

As the industry grows, new businesses will open or relocate nearby to take advantage of the expanding market. The wine industry will support businesses involved in packaging, marketing, storing, selling and shipping wine, as well as those that provide the supplies and maintain the equipment for the businesses. While total spending by wine industry members with other private firms totaled more than \$6.5 million during 2009, regional business expansion will result in a larger percentage of business-to-business expenditures staying in the region.

Growth in Tourism

As the wine industry grows, the region's economy will be impacted by increased wine-related tourism. The verdant Verde Valley sits between historic Prescott and artistic Sedona, two locations that already draw many visitors. A strong wine industry will build upon this natural advantage. An estimated \$15 million in additional economic activity is already generated in Yavapai and Coconino counties due to Verde Valley wine sales and Verde Valley wine tourism that takes place outside the wineries and tasting rooms.* Based on a conservative growth estimate of 10% per year, the total economic impact of the Verde Valley wine industry in 2015 will be over \$44 million.

From Vision to Reality

A \$3 Million Fundraising Campaign for the Southwest Wine Center

Wine growing regions throughout the U.S. have always grown and prospered alongside a prominent academic partner. Arizona is no exception. Yavapai College serves as that partner and has embarked on a Capital Campaign to raise the \$3 million necessary to complete this vision.

Central to the campaign is the need to provide the funds necessary to finish the 17-acre vineyard and state-of-the-art teaching winery located on the Clarkdale campus in the Verde Valley. Together these facilities serve as a gathering place for research and education to spark innovation, fuel economic development, support regional and national collaboration, and provide a catalyst for research. Donations support the continued construction, outfitting and maintenance of these educational facilities and are tax deductible to the fullest extent allowed by law.

To learn more about enrolling in classes at the Southwest Wine Center or to get involved as a contributor to the fundraising campaign visit www.yc.edu/swc or call (928) 717-7773.

Paul Kirchgraber is the director of development and Marcia Jacobson is the grants director for the Yavapai College Foundation.

*University of Arizona, Yavapai County Cooperative Extension, The Economic Contributions of Verde Valley Winemaking (April 2011)

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