

DE SOTO

KANSAS

David R. Anderson
Mayor

Patrick J. Gullfoyle,
ICMA-CM
City Administrator

Lana R. McPherson,
MMC
City Clerk

Patrick G. Reavey
City Attorney

Michael D. Brungardt,
P.E.
City Engineer

CITY COUNCIL:

Randy Johnson

John Krudwig

Ron McDaniel

Lori Murdock

Rick Walker

Blue Jack Crossing--what is it? It isn't the name of a hybrid bee. How about Holy-Field? That isn't a place to go and pray for spiritual renewal. And Stone Pillar is not the name of a nightclub in New Jersey where Bruce Springsteen got his start. Those are names of well-respected and award winning Kansas vineyards, one in Eudora and the other in Basehor. There are the Renaissance Cellars Winery in St. Marys, the Windswept Winery in Winfield, and the Diamond S Vineyard and Winery in Russell, which is about as far west as Kansas vineyards go. If someone wants to buy a bottle of wine produced by one of the 23 to 30 Kansas vineyards, the opportunities are very slim: you can either drive to the vineyard itself or find a liquor store or restaurant that will put Kansas wines on its limited shelf space or menu--that's it.

In 1988, the Kansas legislature understood that the once thriving Kansas wine industry of over 5,000 acres was making a return from its pre prohibition days. The Kansas legislature recognized this gem in the rough. As a part of the Kansas Department of Agriculture, the legislature created the Kansas Grape and Wine Industry Advisory Council and charged it, in part, with the responsibility "to help promote and market the state's grape and wine industry." Part of the Advisory Council's challenge is financial; the State has no money to market Kansas farm wineries scattered throughout half of the state. Few people know about the vineyards and fewer still decide to hop in the car to travel to Russell, Winfield, or St. Marys from the population centers of eastern Kansas to taste the wines of Winfield's Windswept Winery, Russell's Diamond S, or St. Marys Renaissance and then go home with bottles of wine that interest them.

The Advisory Council chair person is Dennis Reynolds, owner of the Somerset Ridge Vineyard located midway between Paola and Louisburg. The City of De Soto teamed up with Somerset Ridge in an effort to produce a unique, never-before event--a wine tasting event on June 16, 2012 from 4PM to 8PM, featuring exclusively wines produced here in Kansas.

I pose three questions along with answers:

(1) What are we trying to do? We are trying to help give the Department of Agriculture a tool and an outlet to market a viable and improving agri-business in Kansas.

(2) How are we trying to do that? We are providing the Kansas and cross-border public with an easy and entertaining learning experience about the quality and variety of Kansas' wineries. A wine tasting event, with currently 10 committed Kansas vineyards, will provide a "bang-for-the-buck" easy incentive for hundreds of wine enthusiasts--uneducated about Kansas quality wines--to get into their cars for a short 10-15 minute drive.

(3) What Kansas roadblock prevents the public from enjoying a State licensed wine tasting event to its fullest? Current law has a mechanism to allow farm wineries to come together to offer a wine tasting event; but that same law prohibits potential customers from buying bottles of wine to take home with them.

www.desotoks.us

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We are asking the legislature to remove that roadblock. ***We are asking you to change the law in order to allow Kansas wineries to sell their unopened, sealed bottles at wine tasting events licensed by the State.*** That simple change in the law will greatly enhance the experience for people attending a wine tasting event and, probably of even more significance, provide a valuable marketing tool for Kansas farm wineries.

Why is the City of De Soto leading the charge for this change in State law? Three reasons:

- (1) We believe that the quality of Kansas farmers' wine production is too unknown and that is a shame.
- (2) We believe that public wine tastings offer the most convenient and successful marketing aide to encourage the wine enjoying public to get in their cars and travel a short distance to experience a collection of Kansas wines at one time.
- (3) Located midway between Lawrence and metro Kansas City, De Soto built a 50 acre Riverfest Park on the banks of the Kansas River. We did so in order to create a regional festival and concert venue to give over 200,000 people within a 10-15 drive a reason to visit De Soto.

DE SOTO

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DATE: January 25, 2012
TO: Kansas Winemakers
FROM: City of De Soto and Somerset Ridge Vineyard and Winery
RE: June 16, 2012 "Winesong at Riverfest" Event

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To help promote the growing, local wine industry, the city of De Soto is planning the first annual **Winesong at Riverfest** event from 4-8 pm on June 16. This wine tasting event is unique; **it will feature only wines produced and bottled in Kansas**. To complement the wine, Kansas-produced cheeses and food products will be offered as well.

The City of De Soto is located on K-10 highway, 15 minutes or less from the +200,000 residents of Lawrence on the west and the Johnson County population hub on the east—a prime location to attract visitors to outdoor events at the City's regional park, Riverfest.

Riverfest is a 50 acre park on the banks of the Kansas River, built in 2008 to serve as a regional venue for concerts, festivals and open-air events needing space for 2,500+ visitors. It is the perfect location to showcase and market Kansas wine to area consumers.

CITY COUNCIL:

Randy Johnson

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Our committee has been working diligently on the event logo, marketing plan, sponsors, logistics, etc. The public's interest in this unique Kansas-only event will increase with each winery that participates. We're now ready to start our discussions with Kansas wineries to see if they'd like to be involved.

What is the winery's cost to participate? Basically, nothing. We are looking for your enthusiasm and willingness to spend a pleasant evening promoting your wines. While our budget is limited this first year, we will offer to purchase at wholesale pricing a minimum of one case of your wines to be sampled at the event. In exchange, we ask for one member of your staff to attend to help pour 1 oz. samples to guests and promote your winery.

We'll provide ice, tasting tables, coolers, logo wine glasses, music, appetizers, and a host of local volunteers. With your wines, a person from your staff and your sales collateral, we believe this will be a wonderful opportunity to showcase your wines and promote the growing Kansas grape-growing and wine industry. Our goals for this first year event are simple:

Attendance: goal is 1,000 people

Cost: \$10-\$15 per adult over 21...final ticket price to be determined

When: 4-8pm on Saturday, June 16

Number of wineries participating: goal is 15 of the state's 31 registered wineries

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And don't worry about the fickle behavior of Mother Nature. A large, attractive peak pole tent will have ample room in case of weather.

There you have it—an offer to showcase and market your wine along with other Kansas wineries at basically no cost.

What we need now is a commitment so we can proceed with our marketing efforts to our +200,000 Kansas neighbors. To confirm your participation, we ask that you email the City of De Soto at pguilfoyle@desotoks.us by Friday, February 10. When you respond, please let us know the cost of a wholesale case of your wine (can be 3-6 different wines per case), the names of the wines you plan to bring and the name of the person attending from your winery.

Once we know who plans to participate, our committee will communicate more details to you. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to either City Administrator Pat Guilfoyle or Cindy Reynolds.

Sending you best wishes for your off-season vineyard work! We hope you'll join us for the first Winesong at Riverfest event designed to promote Kansas wines!

Cheers and best regards,



David R. Anderson
Mayor



DE SOTO
KANSAS



Cindy Reynolds
Somerset Ridge Vineyard and Winery



Somerset
SOMERSET RIDGE

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