

CONTACT:

Casey Fryda, PR/Communications

Phone: (920) 498-6288 or (800) 422-NWTC, ext. 6288

Casey.Fryda@NWTC.edu



News Release

Wisconsin's growing wine industry prompts two unusual college programs

NWTC offers new degrees in winemaking, vineyard management

(Monday, June 13, 2011) GREEN BAY - Suddenly, Midwesterners who dream of a second career in wine country don't need to migrate to California.

As Wisconsin's wine industry grows, business owners are looking for both employees and suppliers right here. That translates into more job possibilities and income potential without the need to leave friends and family behind.

"This industry is growing in Wisconsin," says Maria Milano, Co-owner of Parallel 44 Vineyard & Winery in Kewaunee. "Every year since we've been in business we've grown. We've doubled sales and production, and I think that's an indication of the quality of wines this area produces."

Two new degree programs at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College are designed to meet the area's growing demand for skilled winemakers and vineyard managers. Midwestern winemakers hope the programs expand the workforce, increase the number of local grape suppliers, and support existing and entrepreneurial Wisconsin wineries.

The new Associate of Applied Science programs are both accepting applications for fall 2011 admission:

- **Winemaking (Enology):** Winemaking applications and theory in the wine production process. Graduates will be prepared for entry to mid-level positions in the winemaking industry.
- **Vineyard Management (Viticulture):** Specific agricultural knowledge, techniques, and theories to improve vineyard health. Graduates will be prepared for entry to mid-level positions in the grape growing industry.

The programs are designed to serve those who want to work for an existing business and those who want to start their own. Tim Abel is Owner of LedgeStone Vineyards in Greenleaf. "My wife and I started this business to make a second career for ourselves," he said. "It's exciting to see the grapes ripen from bud break to harvest. You get excited that you're going to make this really exceptional wine from these grapes that you grew yourself. So there's a personal satisfaction from growing grapes to the winemaking side of

Read the latest NWTC news at www.NWTC.edu/AtNWTC/News

it.”

Classes are offered mainly online, making them accessible anywhere. Each program includes hands-on training and mentoring with a wine producer or grape grower who can be selected from industry specialists close to the student's home, making the in-person education convenient for students across the state and throughout the Midwest.

The program is offered in partnership with the Viticulture and Enology Science and Technology Alliance (VESTA). The alliance is a group of universities and two-year colleges that offer grape production and winemaking courses "tailored specifically for the mid-America region."

Milano said that having a program in Wisconsin is important.

"The wonderful thing is that the classes are specifically applicable to Midwest grape growing and winemaking," she said. "That will only help support the industry and make it possible for people to get into it more easily. For us, as an existing winery, it's beneficial because we'll have people coming out of the program who are well trained and employable in the industry."

Learn more at www.nwtc.edu

-END-