



New Mexico wine industry receives boost from vineyard restoration fund

LAS CRUCES, N.M. – Whether you’re looking for a glass of dry, red cabernet to pair with a steak, or a glass of crisp pinot grigio to complement a cheese platter, rest assured you’ll be able to find a bottle of wine made from grapes grown in New Mexico. The history of New Mexico wine dates back to the 1600s, and today, the Land of Enchantment is home to over 50 wineries and tasting rooms.

Despite the New Mexico wine industry’s robust history, it has faced similar challenges in recent years as other agriculture-related industries in the state. Those challenges include – but are not limited to – labor shortages, climate events and the COVID-19 pandemic. To address those challenges, the state legislature created the New Mexico Vineyard Restoration Fund to provide rootstock for the production of wine by New Mexico wineries.

The fund will provide \$950,000 to New Mexico wineries and vineyards for the reimbursement of purchased rootstock or vines, to replace lost vines as a result of unavoidable event or to expand the planting of vines for the future growth and viability of the New Mexico wine and grape growers’ industry.

Saving the wine

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“Driving through New Mexico, it’s hard to miss all the vineyards, wineries and tasting rooms, but the industry has struggled in recent years due to unfortunate circumstances, and it’s our goal to assist these agriculturalists through the vineyard restoration fund,” New Mexico Agriculture Secretary Jeff Witte said. “The wine industry is vital to the livelihoods of those who plant vines, harvest grapes, make wine and serve it to customers. It’s also important to the state’s overall economy.”

New Mexico’s grape and wine industry generates approximately \$876 million in total economic activity, according to a report by the New Mexico State University Agricultural Science Center at Los Lunas. The 2017 Census of Agriculture lists New Mexico as having 376 grape farms, covering 1,280 acres.

Eligible applicants for funding include:

New Mexico wineries with an active license and established vineyard that is three or more acres in size.

New Mexico vineyards that currently grow grapes for the industry with a vineyard that is three or more acres in size.

New Mexico wineries with an active license that desire to plant or expand a vineyard to three or more acres.

New Mexico farmers with experience, land and water rights and an interest in grapes.

Beginning grape-growers or new farmers planting a vineyard.

The New Mexico Wine and Grape Growers Association – also referred to as New Mexico Wine – will manage the funds. The New Mexico Department of Agriculture, under the umbrella of New Mexico State University, will oversee the funding program, as outlined in House Bill 2.

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For more details and to apply, visit nmwine.com. The 2022 planting season application deadline is Oct. 31. The application period for the 2023 planting season begins Feb. 1. Program funds will be available each year through June 30, 2025 or until fully exhausted, whichever comes first.

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