

## **NGWB Grant Final Report (FY21-22)**

**Contract Number** #18-13-333 - NWGGA – TOAST Nebraska

**Grant Amount** \$155,000

### **Contact Information**

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### **Issue of Interest**

The Nebraska Winery and Grape Grower Association continues to need to market Nebraska wines and grape varieties directly to Nebraska consumers. 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.

### **Approach to Problem**

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. TOAST Nebraska and Holiday TOAST Nebraska help encourage increased recognition and demand of Nebraska wine and grape related products. These events allowed each individual participating winery to brand themselves in their own tent or booth area to give guests a “taste” of what it would be like to visit their winery and it also allows the industry to market all Nebraska Wines which can increase demand and consumption of Nebraska Wines. The Nebraska Winery & Grape Growers Association continues to promote the industry by marketing to consumers by hosting the annual events TOAST Nebraska in Omaha, NE and Holiday TOAST Nebraska in Grand Island, NE.

The grant allowed for the following:

- Provided funding to promote the Holiday TOAST Nebraska Wine Festival for a fall 2021 event
- Provided funding to promote the TOAST Nebraska Wine Festival for a spring 2022 event
- Provide two central locations where attendees could taste various Nebraska Wines and encourage individuals to purchase Nebraska Wines during the events

### **Goals/Achievement of Goals**

The goal of this project is to provide quality events where attendees can learn about the various wines that Nebraska has to offer and to provide education about the varieties that Nebraska has available.

The 2021 Holiday TOAST Nebraska Wine Festival was a great addition in 2021. Hosted on November 13, 2021 at Fonner Park in Grand Island, the new festival welcomed 1,000 attendees, 26

artisan and food vendors, 13 wineries and 82 winery employees, volunteers, and event staff. Attendees were able to sample wines, purchase bottles of wine and vendor merchandise, play holiday themed games, participate in wine bingo and attend charcuterie demonstrations. This event helped bring consumer recognition to a new more central location in Nebraska and introduced Nebraska wines to a previously untapped market.

The 2022 TOAST Nebraska Wine Festival was also extremely successful. Hosted on May 13-14, 2022 at Stinson Park in Aksarben Village in Omaha, the festival welcomed attendees (4,500 tickets sold), 17 wineries and 273 winery employees, volunteers, and event staff. The centrally located park allowed for great foot traffic, day of marketing, as well as free parking, nearby hotels, and lots of attractions within walking distance – a must for an alcohol focused event. Marketing was launched in late January through April and efforts needed to be slowed due to such a great response and a ticket cap of 4,500. Overall general marketing efforts had a reach of over 1.5 million Nebraskans and Midwesterners increasing not only the opportunity for ticket sales but industry recognition as well. NWGGA partnered with 43 food vendors and artisans to offer snacks, meals, and shopping to event attendees. There were multiple bands throughout each day as well as wine education sessions, wine bingo, year games and charcuterie demonstrations.

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

Overall, both events have been extremely successful. These two events are a great tool to promote and impact the Nebraska wine industry and we hope to continue to host more great TOAST events in the future. The TOAST Nebraska spring event was awarded the Best Festival by Omaha's Choice awards in 2021 & 2022 and second runner-up in the 2021 Outstanding Event Award category for the Nebraska Tourism Awards.

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

In comparison to the most recent 2022 festival at Stinson Park in Omaha:

Tickets Sold	2021: 3,072	2022: 4,500
Average Ticket Price Sold	2021: \$39.66	2022: \$43.11
Wineries and Vendors Attended	2021: 45	2022: 60

These metrics were based off of the most available data from the 2021 festival. Tickets sold could have been much higher as the event sold out in advance, but the committee wanted to make sure that the wineries could serve the increased number of attendees before growing too large.

The 2022 Holiday TOAST Festival will be held on November 12, 2022 at Fonner Park in Grand Island and is expected to have another great turnout.

Tickets Sold	2021: 1,099
Average Ticket Price Sold	2021: \$38.81
Wineries and Vendors Attended	2021: 45

2021 was the first year that the Holiday TOAST festival was held so there are no previous metrics to compare.

## Financial Report

Toast	Description
<b>\$155,000.00</b>	<b>Grant Funding</b>
-\$17.74	Aug AAM Exp (ch#2186)
-\$46.01	July AAM Exp (ch#2194)
-\$5,806.93	Postage; Supplies (totes); SDLs, etc (check#2202)
-\$1,040.23	Backdrops/Décor/Centerpieces, etc. (check#2204)
-\$1,000.00	DJ - Entertainment for TOAST (check#2205)
-\$300.00	Line Dancers for Entertainment TOAST (check#2206)
-\$634.00	Wine Bucks & Food Vouchers (Ch#2220/2211/ 2207-09/2213-14/2217/2222-23)
-\$265.00	Wine Bucks & Food Vouchers (ch#2210/2221/2224/2215)
-\$7,535.00	Fonner Park (check#2227)
-\$5,785.36	FB Promos from 07.23 to 11.24.2021 (check #2229)
-\$13,107.60	Reimbursements to Wineries for Holiday TOAST (checks 2230-2241)
-\$84.48	Mileage for Holiday TOAST for Alyssa Brodersen (check #2243)
-\$84.48	Mileage for Holiday TOAST for Cameryn Kremer (check #2245)
-\$915.00	Electrician - Holiday TOAST (check #2247)
-\$756.00	NRG-Grand Island Holiday TOAST (check #2249)
-\$748.00	NRG-Kearney Holiday TOAST (check #2250)
-\$503.00	Holiday TOAST Marketing (check #2262) paid by cc/aam KBBK-FM
-\$409.31	Staff Mileage for Holiday TOAST (Kelsey/Megan/Andee/Jennifer/Taylor)
-\$5,712.32	Holiday Toast Exhibit Booths/Lodging/Marketing-Bingo/AM-Lodging/DJ
-\$370.92	Holiday Toast Supplies/Education-Charcuterie/Gift/Passport-All Needs
-\$40.00	Food Vouchers-Sauce Bosses (Check #2219)
-\$2,573.75	50% Dep for Midwest Sound & Lighting (check #3003)
-\$7,385.00	Stemless Wine Tasters (EFT)
-\$5,703.98	Retreat/Passport Prizes & Postage/Toast Supplies/FB Ad Placement - expensify
-\$9,050.00	Stinson Park - Reservation/Toilet Rental/Save the Date (check #3026)
-\$110.78	Hillcrest Wedding - Décor (check #3035)
-\$4,085.24	TOAST Totes/SDL Printing - Expensify March (check #3042 - AAM paid CC)
\$80,929.87	Current Remaining Balance

Estimated Remaining Fees:

<b>Toast</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>\$80,929.87</b>	<b><i>Remaining Grant Funding</i></b>
-\$423.00	Douglas Co Health Dpt (check #3000)
-\$150.00	Deposit for Kaleigh Mueller Photography (check #3023)
-\$5,000.00	Rental City (check #3046) - Tents/Tables/Chairs, etc.
-\$3,850.00	Kaleigh Mueller (check #3047) - Drone/Photography Coverage
-\$445.21	Event Banners (check #3049)-Priority Printing
-\$142.00	DCHD Food Safety & Compliance (check 3043)
-\$1,608.75	Six Golf Cars (check #3053)
-\$620.00	DD Food Vouchers/Volunteer Meals (checks 3079/3081/3082/3085/3092/3089/3090)
-\$2,385.00	Bands - Check #3055-#3060
-\$45.00	High Voltage BBQ - Food Voucher (Check #3084)
-\$25.00	Little Nut Hut - Food Voucher (Check #3086)
-\$45.00	Best Burger - Food Voucher (Check #3078)
-\$8,232.57	VISA - TOAST/MARKETING Expenses
-\$999.08	402 Ink (check 3098) - Volunteer Shirts
-\$463.74	Staff Mileage (checks 3101-3107/3109/3110)
-\$84.24	Staff Mileage (Check 3108)
-\$100.00	Dawson Effle (check 3088) - Movers for Wine/TOAST
-\$4,352.76	Resource Rental (check 3094) - Fencing
-\$16,235.70	Rental City (check 3095) - Tents
-\$2,055.75	Muzzy Ice Service (check 3096)
-\$500.00	Cody Burkhardt (team) (Check 3112) - Movers for Wine/TOAST
-\$350.00	Hannah Kepler (two days) (check 3113) - Mover for Wine/TOAST
-\$2,673.87	Backdrops/Lodging/PC Nametag (check 3117)
-\$4,000.00	Approx Security
-\$ 27,200.00	Approx Reimbursement to Wineries
-\$350.00	Mileage
-\$1,000.00	Cleaning Fee
<b>(2,406.80)</b>	<b>Expense Left Over After Grant Funds</b>

## 2022 Spring TOAST Nebraska Review

Tickets Attended/Purchased	2021	2022
Designated Driver Ticket	62/72	99/109
Friday Ticket Only	934/978	1294/1370
Saturday Ticket Only	1796/1909	2678/2864
2 Two-Day Ticket	39/68	85/140
Volunteers & Vendors	65/206	295/425
	<u>2,896/3,233</u>	<u>4,451/4,908</u>

*\*those that came both days*

**Walkups:** 2021 - 151 Friday/213 Saturday 2022 – 9 Friday/ 7 Saturday

92.7% would purchase a ticket in the future to TOAST Nebraska

27 “No’s” – wanted more vendors and wineries, wanted breweries, too high of ticket price, lines and crowds, tasting samples, better bands, difficult to purchase wine with layout, felt rushed, wineries unorganized, more charcuterie/better food options, too many sweet wines.

### TICKETING

- According to the 540 attendee survey responses that were completed for Ticketing – Purchasing and Event Check in: 354 – 5 votes and 153 – 4 votes. 93.9% rated 4 or higher.
- Some Comments:
  - check-in was very easy, the line was long at times but they were pleasantly surprised at how quickly check-in was, requested more direction at check-in or tote booth for the layout of the park
- Went quickly and seamlessly, still had some that said they did not receive multiple QR codes. Need to dig into this further with GrowthZone, most likely user error on attendee end.
- Issue with security arriving late again, has been addressed with park.
- No walkups this year due to event selling out. Ok to monitor on Saturday and sell additional tickets if there is a significant number of people that no showed.
- Re-entry pass worked well this year but we did still have some complaints and some guests did not come back in time. Need to look into re-entry policy further.

### INFO DESK/FREEBIES

- According to the 538 attendee survey responses that were completed for Freebies - tasting glass, guide, wine tote: 339 – 5 votes and 153 – 4 votes. 91.4% rated 4 or higher.
- Some Comments:
  - Tasting glass size, input is for larger – do not have much of a choice, most thought glass was cute, some requests for larger tasting pours – do not have a larger glass, recommended year on glass – do not have a year on glass, recommended a card and pencil/pen to take notes.
- Need staff to tell attendees about booklet or hand to them directly so that they know it is there.

### WINERIES

- According to the 539 attendee survey responses that were completed for Wineries - wine tasting & purchasing: 344 – 5 votes and 141 – 4 votes. 90% rated 4 or higher.
- Some Comments:
  - Great wines & great service, Long lines/confusing layout at some booths yet other comments were that lines moved well – this most likely due to the fact that the wineries were not all in one place, Prices were considered reasonable, requests for more shade, more signage for tasting vs. purchasing lines, attendees enjoyed hearing about the wines.
- Need to address winery flow/setup for next year. Review tents that had good flow for next year.
- Need to offer more feedback on how many volunteers should be staffed.
- Overall the event ran very smoothly and majority of attendees had a great time, we will continue to tweak details each year to make sure booths run as smoothly as possible.
- Still need to work on better check-in process for wineries and vendors.

## BANDS

- According to the 539 attendee survey responses that were completed for Bands - music and bands each day: 288 – 5 votes and 156 – 4 votes. 82.3% rated 4 or higher.
- Some Comments:
  - Most enjoyed the music, some commented that it needed to be a little more upbeat/more variety, some would like wine education and bingo on main stage, some commented the length between band setup seemed long.
- Volume was much better this year.

## ACTIVITIES

- According to the 496 attendee survey responses that were completed for Activities - wine bingo & education sessions: 190 – 5 votes, 134 – 4 votes. 65.5% rated 4 or higher. 146 rated 3 but majority the comments for the 3 rating were that they were not able to participate.
- Some Comments:
  - Bingo, education and charcuterie classes were all a big hit, some would like more wine education, requested a larger shade area for bingo and education, majority of comments were that they missed the activities because they were visiting the wineries.
- Need to better promote wine bingo and classes next year, may need to have the bands make an announcement.
- Maybe try a scavenger hunt that attendees can participate in while visiting each winery and they can get entered into a drawing for a prize if they complete everything?
- Will need shade in the education area – may need to consider moving it back to big top.

## FOOD

- According to the 527 attendee survey responses that were completed for Food - food options and overall dining experience: 254 – 5 votes, 166 – 4 votes. 79.7% rated 4 or higher.
- Some Comments:
  - Food was great, attendees would like dessert options (ice cream, chocolate), attendees would like cold food options. Some mentioned wanting more food options and some did not purchase food.
- Food trucks on S. 67<sup>th</sup> were not pleased about location – need to address setup/load in more for next year

## ARTISANS

- According to the 524 attendee survey responses that were completed for Handmade Goods - artisans and boutiques: 255 – 5 votes, 174 – 4 votes. 81.9% rated 4 or higher.
- Some Comments:
  - Requested more wine specific products and apparel, comments that boutiques were overpriced, quite a few comments that attendees did not have time to look at vendors because they were at the wineries and were interested in the wine only, overall comments were positive.
- Some boutiques were upset about placement, will try spacing vendors between booths next year.
- Much better sales on Saturday than Friday but numbers were doubled
- Still need to look at food truck/vendor layouts for next year

#### LOCATION

- According to the 540 attendee survey responses that were completed for Location - Stinson Park and surrounding area: 428 – 5 votes, 87 – 4 votes. 95.4% rated 4 or higher.
- Some Comments:
  - Overwhelmingly positive feedback for location, requests for more shade
- Need more shaded area

#### OVERALL EXPERIENCE

- According to the 534 attendee survey responses that were completed for Overall event experience: 367 – 5 votes, 140 – 4 votes. 94.9% rated 4 or higher.
- Some Comments:
  - More shady spots, complimentary bottle of water for attendees, better tent flow, extremely well-organized event, requests for re-entry, excited to return for next years event, ore seating requested, more snack options
- Overall very good feedback