



Virginia Wineries Association Newsletter

www.vawine.org

September 2009

- BIG SAVINGS - SPECIAL OFFER

You can still take advantage of all the great deals our Preferred Partners have to offer by joining for a SPECIAL half year membership fee of just \$150 on the Silver membership. This membership makes you eligible for significant discounts on items such as wine making supplies and your general liability coverage and so much more.

Call our office for more information and an application today!
804-592-3196

Board Nominations are Requested

Dear VWA Member -

Elections for Board Members are conducted at the Annual Membership Meeting in November. This year's meeting is November 16th. We are reaching out to all members to see if you wish to serve on the Virginia Wineries Association Board of Directors or if you wish to nominate someone else.

Please be aware of the time commitment. The Board meets the 3rd Monday of every month in person or by teleconference. Board members also do some committee work.

It is requested that all nominees submit a mini bio stating their experience in the industry, a paragraph will suffice. Please submit by email to info@vawine.org or by mail to the association offices. Upon receiving your submittal, we will send you a form to sign and return. Nominations need to be submitted by **October 11th**.

Help to support Virginia's wine industry and submit your nomination today for this rewarding position.

To contribute articles or if you have suggestions, ideas or comments that you want to get out to the industry, please send an email to info@vawine.com.



Save the Date

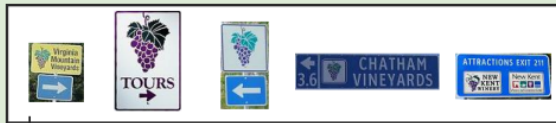
November 16th
10 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.



Mark your calendars for the November 16th Annual Meeting. VWA has a full agenda of educational seminars wrapping around our Annual Membership Meeting and lunch. Learn how to use Face Book and Twitter to further promote your business, learn the importance of protecting your trademark and so much more!

Look for registration forms and more information coming in the mail soon OR visit our [web site](#) for registration materials, agendas, sponsorship opportunities and other important information.

Plan to attend and see what your association is doing for you!



Virginia Wine Marketing: Highway Signage Programs
by Amy Ciarametaro, VA Wine Board Marketing Office

As many of you know, the state signage program can be overwhelming, but it is also a valuable resource for driving traffic to wineries. In a survey done by our office last year, wineries ranked highway signs as the second most important resource for bringing foot traffic to wineries. So Annette and I recently sat down with Jason Newcomb of Virginia Logos and Rick Burgess of the Virginia Department of Transportation to gather more information on signage opportunities available to wineries.

Here's a little background information. VDOT contracted Virginia Logos in 2004 to operate, under their highway signage umbrella, several programs that are applicable to wineries. Those programs include the Supplemental Guide Signs program, the Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs ("TODS") program and the Logo Attractions Program.

The Supplemental Guide Signs program dates back roughly 30 years. Wineries

commonly refer to these signs as the "grape cluster" signs that can be seen on primary and secondary roads. In 2004, VDOT overhauled the program for a couple of reasons. First, some VDOT regional offices were inconsistent with implementing program regulations. Second, "sign pollution," which by definition is additional distractions to the (commuting) public, necessitated some program changes. Wineries that had obtained the iconic signs prior to 2004 were grandfathered in, with the understanding that there would be an annual fee for management, currently \$175 per set of up to five signs. In 2010, the annual fee will increase to \$450 per set of up to five. Those wineries wishing to obtain the grape cluster supplemental guide signs post 2004 were referred to the next two programs.

The Tourist-Oriented Directional Signs program was developed in 2004 to replace the Supplemental Guide Signs program on primary and secondary roads. These signs are also found on primary and secondary roads. Each overall sign may have up to four tourist-related directional panels on it. These panels are not winery specific and often include other, nearby attractions and businesses. Wineries can purchase three panels (each on a separate sign) at primary intersections within a 15-mile radius of the winery. They can also purchase a panel on each of the primary intersections coming from the opposing directions, for a grand total of six main panels. Each panel has a \$100 application fee and costs \$450 annually. Wineries must be open six hours a day, five days a week, twelve weeks out of the year to participate. Once they submit an application to enroll in the program, it generally takes three to six months to produce and place the sign(s).

On each of the panels wineries have the option to add the new grape cluster icon; however, due to space constraints, this does limit the number of characters they can list on each row. If they proceed with using the grape icon, wineries can transition that into what is known as a trailblazer. A trailblazer is a smaller sign, which displays only the grape icon and is used to direct consumers through the necessary turns to the winery, beyond the purchased panels. Each trailblazer has a \$100 application fee and costs \$100 annually.

Lastly, the Logo Attractions Program was also developed in 2004 to assist highway motorists looking for specific travel services or attractions. These signs are found on the mainline guiding up to exit ramps and on actual exit ramps off an interstate. On any given exit corridor there may be up to four Logo signs, a number which is federally regulated. Each of the overall Logo signs can house up to six service or attraction logos related to that exit. Wineries are restricted to utilizing only the exit ramp that is physically closest to their winery as motorists would drive. Pricing for this program is based on traffic count statistics. For mainlines that have over 40,000 motorists (referred to as high-volume) daily, they can purchase one sign on the inbound exit, plus one sign on the opposing inbound exit, for \$1,000 each annually. For mainlines that have under 40,000 motorists (referred to as regular-volume) daily, they can purchase one sign on the inbound exit, plus one sign on the opposing inbound exit for \$800 each annually. According to VDOT, wineries should be open during a normal operating season; however, there is no specific timeframe. Virginia Logos does offer services to switch out signs during the off season. Once the winery submits an application to enroll in the program, it generally takes six weeks to six months to produce and place the sign(s). This timeframe can vary greatly depending on existing signage availability. Wineries can also purchase additional trailblazer signs with the Logo Program. These signs are the same size as the actual logo within the Logo sign and wineries can purchase as many signs needed to direct consumers to the winery. Each trailblazer costs \$150 annually.

Winery Sign Program - Price Increase

Please Note - As you are putting together your budgets for 2010 the supplemental signage for wineries will be going up from \$175 to \$450 for a set of five. This price will not be prorated. This rate change will take effect September 16th, 2010.