Tennessee Wine and Grape Board
Ellington Agricultural Center
Holeman Building, Old Hickory Conference Room
424 Hogan Rd. Nashville, TN 37220
Oct. 21, 2026
10 a.m. Central time

Agenda

- Call to order
- Roll call
- Approval of previous meeting minutes
- Old Business
    - Status of Funds report
    - Welcome of new board members
    - Updates from the Tennessee Farm Winegrowers Alliance – discussion
        - Wholesale Rebate Program
        - Quality Assurance Program
        - Marketing
        - Grape Root Borer Project
        - Upcoming Events
    - Annual Report to the Governor - discussion
- New Business
    - Tennessee Wine Quality Assurance Program updates – consideration and approval
    - Tennessee Excise Tax - discussion
    - University of Tennessee Viticulture Program funding request - consideration and approval
    - 2026 Annual Report to the Governor – discussion
- Public comment period
- Adjournment

Ring the bell at the front door of the Holeman Building to gain entrance.

Microsoft Teams meeting
Click to join: Join the Wine and Grape Board Meeting now
Meeting ID: 243 736 153 478 334
Passcode: pn9XU7VL

Join the Wine and Grape Board by phone United States
Find a local number
Phone conference ID: 841 977 527#

Join on a video conferencing device
Tenant key: stateoftn@m.webex.com
Video ID: 115 667 563 1

Tennessee Wine and Grape Board Meeting
August 7, 2026
10:00 am - 12:00 pm CST
Holeman Building, Ellington Agriculture Center
424 Hogan Rd, Nashville, TN 37220

Minutes:

- Call to order – Chairman Bill Sanderson called the meeting to order at 10:15 AM CST

- Roll Call

  Members present: Chairman Bill Sanderson. Cary Cox, David Lockwood, Kacey Troup, Melanie Beauchamp

  Members absent: Yardley Sawyer

- Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes:

  Melanie Beauchamp made a motion to accept the April 14, 2026, meeting minutes. David Lockwood seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. The motion to accept the minutes was unanimously approved.

- Old Business

  - **Status of Fund Report** – Secretary Kacey Troup announced that the board has an available balance of $110,505.65 and reviewed the board's open contract balances. TFWA contract for QAP, Wholesaler Rebate, and Marketing has a balance of $77,054.65. TFWA Contract for Grape Root Borer has a balance of $1,545.63.

  - **Update on Board Member Vacancy Nomination Process** – Secretary Kacey Troup shared that all board member nominations have been moving through the approval process. TDA is waiting to hear who has been selected.

  - **Update from TN Farm Winegrowers Alliance** – Chase Vienneau provided an update on the Quality Assurance program, the TN Wholesaler Rebate program, and the General Awareness Marketing campaign that TFWA is conducting on behalf of the Wine and Grape Board. As well as the Grape Root Borer Project.

    - Quality Assurance Program (QAP):
      - No new requests since the last meeting. This is due to the competition schedule; many competitions have not occurred yet. Several submissions are expected to come in quarter 3 as competitions occur.
    - Tennessee Wholesaler Rebate Program:
      - Quarter 2 2026 Rebate Program saw five participating Wholesalers with twelve TN Wineries represented. A total of 2,650 cases (31,800 bottles) were submitted, with total rebates of $14,210.

- General Awareness Marketing Campaign:
    - Remaining 2026 Wine Festival Dates
        - Sip Townsend Balloon Wine Festival – August 15, 2026
        - Memphis Wine Festival – November 7, 2026
    - Tennessee Wines launched a rebrand and updated website.
    - Continued efforts for statewide and regional wine trails. As well as digital and print marketing efforts for festivals, wine trails, and individual wineries.
- UT Wines Program offers TN wineries to co-brand with the University of TN while providing support for UT viticulture programs. Since the April meeting, an additional $5,000 has been generated for the Don Collier Viticultural Fund.
- The Grape Root Borer Project is showing success. The GRB Isomate has once again received Section 18 emergency approval from the EPA this year. 200 acres worth of GRBZ Isomate twisty ties have, along with monitoring traps, been distributed to vineyards across the state.

- **Annual Report to the Governor –** Secretary Kacey Troup presented a draft of the board's annual report for review. It was recommended that anytime "wine industry" was mentioned, it be changed to "grape and wine industry". David Lockwood moved to approve the board's annual report as recommended. Melanie Beauchamp seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. The motion was unanimously approved.

- New Business

    - **TN Farm Winegrowers Alliance (TFWA) Funding Request:**
        - Grow Tennessee Wineries and Grapes – Wholesale Rebate, QAP, and Marketing Programs was presented to the board by Chase Vienneau. This proposal will create a new contract with TFWA to continue the current Wholesale Rebate, QAP, and Marketing Programs. The funding request is broken down by
            1. Wholesale Rebate Program: $18,000
            2. General Awareness Marketing Campaign: $40,000
            3. Quality Assurance Program: $8,500
            4. TFWA Project Management fee (15%): $9,975
               Total: $76,475.00

        Melanie Beauchamp moved to enter into a new contract with TFWA as presented for the Wholesale Rebate, QAP, and Marketing Programs, and the project management fee. David Lockwood seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken, and the motion passed unanimously.

- Public Comment

- Members of the Public Present:
    - Chase Vienneau – TN Farm Winegrower Alliance
    - Emily Allison – TN Department of Agriculture
    - Autumn McGee– TN Department of Agriculture
    - Dr. Pierre Davadant – University of Tennessee
    - Dr. Stephan Sommer – University of Tennessee
    - Kate Roberts - McMahan Winstead & Richardson
- Dr. Stephan Sommer shared with the board the University of Tennessee's interest in restarting the Wine of the South Competition in 2027. This competition would include 13 states from Texas to Virginia to participate in a regional wine competition that will highlight local wine varieties.
- Dr. Pierre Davadant provided an update on the University of Tennessee Viticulture Research Program. Including research related to YAN, a grower survey, pruning studies, and rain control research.
- Dr. Lockwood shared that he is the new Grape and Hops consultant for the University of TN.

- The next Meeting is to be held on October 21, 2026, from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm CST in the Holeman Building at Ellington Agricultural Center in Nashville, TN.

- Adjourn – Melanie Beauchamp made a motion to adjourn. David Lockwood seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 11:38 am.

Minutes approved at the meeting held on Oct 21, 2026

Motion to approve minutes from August 7, 2026:

- Motioned by: Melanie Beauchamp
- Seconded by: Cary Cox
- Voting method: roll call
    - For: 7
    - Against: 0
    - Abstain: 0
- Result: Carried
    - Individual roll-call votes:
        - Chairman Bill Sanderson - yes
        - Cary Cox - yes
        - Chase Vienneau -yes
        - Kacey Troup - yes
        - Melanie Beauchamp - yes
        - Dr. Pierre Davadant - yes
        - Yardley Sawyer -yes
- Conflict of Interest Disclosures, Recusals, or Abstentions: None

Funding Report - Wine and Grape Board

FY 2027 Budget	
Recurring Base Budget	$ 100,000
Additional Appropriation	-
Reserve	$98,426.15
Commitments	(78,270.61)
Available Balance	**$ 120,155.54**

FY27 Carryforward Request	$ 198,426.15

Open Contracts - Current Commitments

Grantee	Contract ID	End Date	Award	Current Year Payout	Balance	Commitment
TN Farm Winegrowers Alliance	81384	1/14/2029	$ 373,260.00	$ -	$ 249.98	$ 249.98
TN Farm Winegrowers Alliance	89246	12/31/2029	$ 15,000.00	$ -	$ 1,545.63	$ 1,545.63
TN Farm Winegrowers Alliance	Pending	9/24/2029	$ 76,475.00	$ -	$ 76,475.00	$ 76,475.00

Budget History

Fiscal Year	Recurring	Non-Recurring	Actual Expenditures
2020	$ -	$ 300,000	$ -
2021	-	-	75,137.03
2022	-	150,000	286,232.54
2023	-	150,000	113,006.80
2024	100,000	50,000	240,644.10
2025	100,000	-	87,809.91
2026	100,000	-	260,759.66
2027	100,000	-	-
	$ 400,000	$ 650,000	$ 1,063,590

Tennessee Wine & Grape Board

Program Update
Date: October 19, 2026

Dear Members of the Tennessee Wine & Grape Board,

Please find the following quarterly update covering activities during Q3 2026 for the Tennessee Wine Quality Assurance Program (QAP), the Tennessee Wine Wholesaler's Rebate Program, and Statewide Marketing & Promotion efforts, including UT Wines updates. This report also provides updates regarding the Grape Root Borer (GRBZ) programing.

NOTE: As of October 19, 2026, TFWA has not yet received a fully executed copy of the new grant scope approved by the Wine & Grape Board at its previous meeting and presented by Chase Vienneau.

1. Tennessee Wine Quality Assurance Program (QAP)

During Q3 2026, three new QAP submissions/testing requests were received. These submissions have not yet been fully processed as TFWA is awaiting final approval of funding and receipt of a fully executed contract.

Continued outreach will focus on reminding wineries of eligible competitions, testing options, and the marketing value associated with earning approval to use the Tennessee Quality Assurance logo and related materials.

Below is the current list of approved competitions and programs:

- San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition
- San Francisco International Wine Competition
- New York International Wine Competition
- Texas International Wine Competition
- Great American International Wine Competition
- American Wine Society Wine Competition
- The Rosé Wine Competition
- East Meets West Wine Competition
- Finger Lakes Wine Competition
- Beverage Testing Institute (BTI) – Wines scoring 85+ qualify for QAP label
- West Coast Wine Competition
- Wine Enthusiast Magazine (Must be 86+ Points to qualify for QAP)

2. Tennessee Wine Wholesaler's Rebate Program

No Wholesaler Rebate Program activity occurred during Q3 2026 due to delays in finalizing the new contract. TFWA intends to resume the program during Q4 2026 as soon as funding is secured and the new contract is fully executed.

This program reimburses wholesalers at a rate of **$10 per case**, capped at **$2,400 per Tennessee wine brand**.

TFWA will continue to communicate with participating wholesalers and wineries and will provide notice when a new reimbursement cycle can be opened.

3. Marketing & Promotion Efforts

Marketing efforts during Q3 focused on statewide brand development, digital promotion, festival support, and preparation for the remainder of the 2026 event season.

Festival Highlights

- **Sip Townsend Balloon Festival – August 15th, 2026**
  - Approx. 700 attendees
  - 85+ VIP participants engaged in wine, cheese, and chocolate pairing education
  - Winery revenue averaged **$1,200 – $2,300 per farm winery**

Audience Insights

- Regional draw from Georgia, North Carolina, Kentucky, and South Carolina.
- Demographics:
  - 55% women / 45% men
  - Primary age range: 25–60

Upcoming 2026/2027 Festivals

- Memphis Wine Festival – November 7, 2026
- Gatlinburg Smoky Mountain Wine Festival – March 20th, 2027
- Chattanooga Wine Festival – April 10th, 2027
- **NEW - Apple Blossom Wine Festival – May 1st, 2027**
- Sip Townsend Balloon Wine Festival - August 14th, 2027
- **NEW - Discovery Park of America – TBD, 2027 (~~Memphis~~)** union city
- **NEW - Hop Springs – TBD, 2027 (Murfreesboro)**

Additional Marketing Initiatives

AdCritter Marketing Program Update

TFWA has launched a new paid media initiative with AdCritter, utilizing TFWA's own organizational funds to expand awareness of both the Sip Memphis Wine Festival and the Tennessee Statewide Wine Trail. The campaign incorporates Connected TV (CTV), digital billboard, and programmatic display advertising to reach consumers across multiple channels and complement TFWA's existing social media efforts.

For the **Sip Memphis Wine Festival**, TFWA committed **$2,500**, which AdCritter matched, bringing the total campaign value to **$5,000**. TFWA also committed an additional **$5,000** toward promotion of the **Statewide Wine Trail**, with AdCritter again providing a matching contribution for a total campaign value of **$10,000**. Combined, the two initiatives represent **$15,000 in advertising**, supported by **$7,500 in TFWA funds and $7,500 in matching AdCritter support**.

The campaigns will run **CTV, digital billboard, and digital display advertising simultaneously**, with geographic reach extending into key regional markets including **Kentucky and the Atlanta area**. The strategy is designed to generate broad, top-of-funnel awareness of Tennessee wine tourism and festivals, while Meta/Instagram advertising provides a more conversion-focused layer aimed at driving **Memphis ticket sales** and encouraging participation in the **Tennessee Statewide Wine Trail**. This combination allows TFWA to use large-scale digital media for awareness while continuing to capture measurable consumer action through targeted social campaigns.

4. UT Wines Program Update

The UT Wines program continues to gain strong momentum and visibility.

- An additional **$6,100** has been contributed to **UTIA's Viticultural Fund** during this period
- The program is projected to generate approximately **$30,000 annually** in support of UTIA programming
- Expansion continues, with one new wine released and two additional wines currently under consideration:
    - Arrington Vineyards (Estate-grown grapes) - Released
    - Beans Creek Winery (Manchester, TN) - Under Discussion
    - Beachaven Winery (Clarksville, TN) – Under Discussion

This initiative remains a key driver in supporting research, education, and long-term industry growth.

5. Funding Status & Next Steps

The new contract approved by the Wine & Grape Board at its July 2026 meeting has not yet completed the necessary administrative approval and execution process. Until the contract is fully executed and funding becomes available, TFWA will continue current programming to the extent its existing organizational budget allows. Additional funding may be requested in Spring or Summer 2027 to maintain these programs and continue supporting the Wine & Grape Board's industry development and marketing objectives.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership in advancing Tennessee's wine and grape industry.

Sincerely,
Jonathan Ball
Interim Executive Director
Tennessee Farm Winegrowers Alliance, Inc.

adcritter. for Agencies

Tennessee Wines JB

Current Client:
Tennessee Wines
Create / Change Client

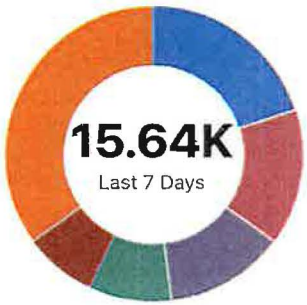
AdCritter AI
- AI Blueprints
- AI Plans

AdCritter DSP
- **Dashboard**
- Master Campaigns
- Solo Campaigns
- Reports
- Audience Pixel
- Client Details
- Contact Support

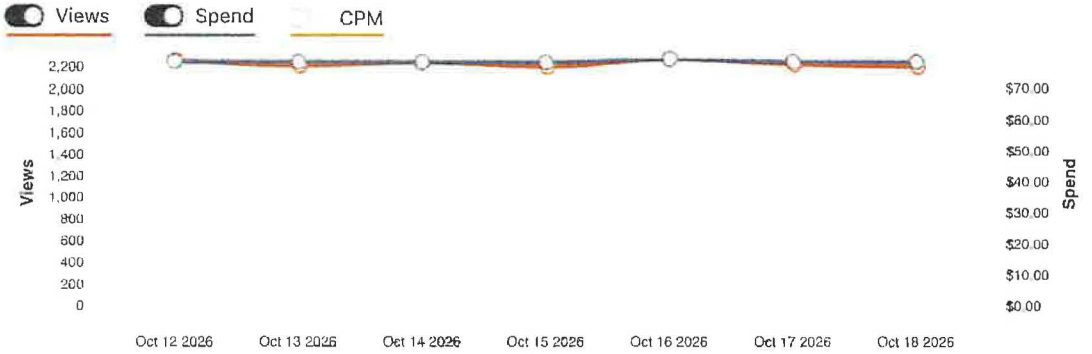
Dashboard: Tennessee Wines

Campaigns 6 | Last 7 Days | Update

Targeted TV Detail



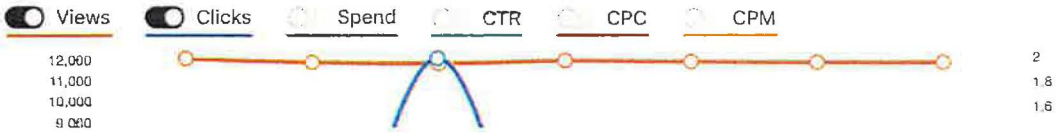
Targeted TV Campaigns



Targeted TV Legend

- **Major Networks**
- **Sports Networks**
- **News Networks**
- **Entertainment Networks**
- **Family Friendly Networks**
- **Lifestyle Networks**
- **Other**

Internet Campaigns



Internet Views
83,744

TENNESSEE WINES

GET TICKETS

21+ with valid ID

MEMPHIS, RAISE A GLASS!

SIP TN WINE FEST IS BACK

Sat, Nov 7

At the Agricenter

SIP TN WINE FEST MEMPHIS


TENNESSEE WINES
Learn More
Please drink responsibly
TENNESSEE'S WINE COUNTRY IS WAITING
Get your free TN Wine Trail Passport to get started!


TENNESSEE WINES
21+ with valid ID
RAISE A GLASS TO TENNESSEE!
SIP TN WINE FEST IS BACK IN MEMPHIS, NOV 7
SIP TN WINE FEST
MEMPHIS
GET TICKETS

MARYVILLE COLLEGE

Jonathan Ball <jonathan.ball@my.maryvillecollege.edu>

Your 6 Month Report: Culinary Road Trip Is Still Working for Tennessee Wines

1 message

Melissa Thompson <melissa@blueprint.inc> Fri, Oct 2, 2026 at 5:01 PM
To: projectconsultant@tennesseewines.com
Cc: melissa@blueprint.inc

StyleBlueprint
CONNECTING YOU TO A LIFE OF STYLE + SUBSTANCE

* Social Campaign for outside Memphis Oct. 23rd

Hi JB!

Your Culinary Road Trip feature has been a real workhorse for Tennessee Wines. Across the reporting period of March 26, 2026 to September 29, 2026, the sponsored article pulled strong readership and kept sending warm, ready-to-explore readers to your content, and the whole effort generated 342 StyleBlueprint referral leads this period. Page views this reporting period means views recorded during the March 26 to September 29 window, and where two windows are shown the rolling 12-month page views end on the period end date.

- **Culinary Road Trip: 4 Tennessee Towns for Food Lovers**: **12,988** page views this reporting period.
- **5 Fabulous Wine Weekends Around the South**: **1,903** page views this reporting period.
- **17 Southern Events & Happenings: August 2026**: **809** page views this reporting period.

A quick note on those referral leads: why call them referral leads instead of clicks? Because the traffic we send is far warmer than a basic click. The

MARYVILLE COLLEGE

Jonathan Ball <jonathan.ball@my.maryvillecollege.edu>

Your Summer Weekend Trips Co-op Results Are In

1 message

Melissa Thompson <melissa@blueprint.inc> Wed, Sep 16, 2026 at 3:18 PM
To: projectconsultant@tennesseewines.com
Cc: melissa@blueprint.inc

StyleBlueprint

CONNECTING YOU TO A LIFE OF STYLE + SUBSTANCE

Hi Jonathan,

This campaign really delivered for Tennessee Wines. Across the sponsored co-op run from May 12, 2026 to August 18, 2026, your placements pulled strong readership, and the sponsored email brought warm, ready-to-explore readers straight to your content. Even better, the whole effort generated **686** StyleBlueprint referral leads this period.

Here is how each piece performed. Page views this reporting period means views recorded during the May 12 to August 18 window.

- **Need a Change of Scenery? Try These Summer Weekend Trips From Nashville**: **3,355** page views this reporting period.
- **Culinary Road Trip: 4 Tennessee Towns for Food Lovers**: **4,559** page views this reporting period.
- **15+ Top Trails in the South for History, Hikes & Hometown Flavor**: **2,056** page views this reporting period.
- **Sponsored email (Your Next Summer Weekend Trip From Nashville Starts Here!)**: sent to **53,852**, with **22,922** opens and **601** clicks.

MARYVILLE COLLEGE

Jonathan Ball <jonathan.ball@my.maryvillecollege.edu>

Your 12-Month Report: Tennessee Wines Across the South

1 message

Melissa Thompson <melissa@blueprint.inc> Wed, Sep 16, 2026 at 3:18 PM
To: projectconsultant@tennesseewines.com
Cc: melissa@blueprint.inc

StyleBlueprint

CONNECTING YOU TO A LIFE OF STYLE + SUBSTANCE

Hi Jonathan,

I am excited to share your 12-month report, and the headline is a great one: over the past year, Tennessee Wines showed up in front of Southern travelers again and again, with our top trails feature alone drawing more than eleven thousand reads. When you add the co-op features and the sponsored email sends together, this was a full year of steady, warm exposure for the wine trail. Here is how each placement performed for the reporting period of April 22, 2025 to April 23, 2026 (page views this reporting period), with rolling 12-month page views ending on that same date where two windows are shown.

- **15+ Top Trails in the South for History, Hikes & Hometown Flavor**: **11,691** page views this reporting period.

- **Top Food & Beverage Festivals in the South**: **7,828** page views this reporting period.

- **Culinary Road Trip: 4 Tennessee Towns for Food Lovers**: **5,139** page views this reporting period, **12,967** rolling 12-month page views.

- **18 Memphis Events & Happenings: November 2025**: **1,380** page views this reporting period.

- **17 Southern Events & Happenings: November 2025**: **1,354** page views this reporting period, **2,734** rolling 12-month page views.

- **Sponsored email, To Do This Weekend: 5 Events + 1 Home + 5 Seasonal Cocktails**: **18,695** sent, **9,482** opens, **56** clicks.

- **Sponsored email, 4 Tennessee Weekend Getaways for Your Next Adventure**: **267,756** sent, **104,682** opens, **406** clicks.

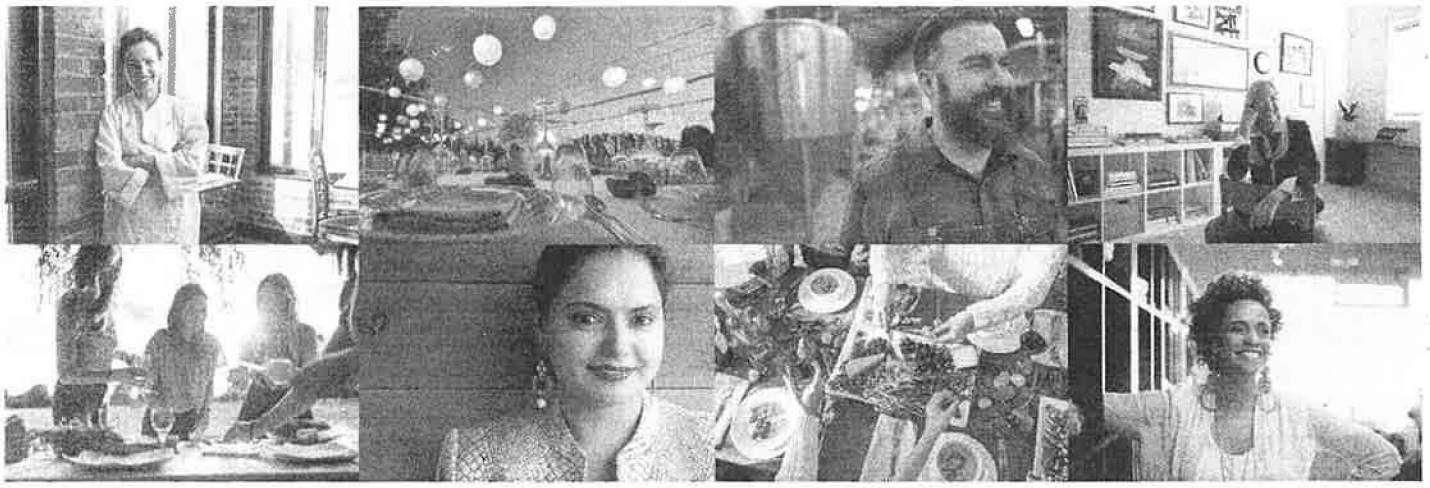
Across all of this activity, we drove a total of **511** StyleBlueprint referral leads to Tennessee Wines this period. Why referral leads instead of clicks? Because the traffic we send is far warmer than a basic click. The person already read about you, unlike SEM or programmatic.

You can view the full report here: https://reports.styleblueprint.ai/377212cc377212cc

We are overdue for a catch-up, and I would love to walk through these numbers together and talk through what is next. Just reply with a day and time that works and I will send a Google Meet invite.

All My Best,
Melissa

Melissa Thompson
Account Executive - Travel
melissa@blueprint.inc



StyleBlueprint

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Tennessee Wines

Targeted Social Media Campaign Report

July 01, 2026 - July 29, 2026

Targeted Social Media Campaign

Number of Impressions

59,720

Number of Referral Leads

1,357

Total Reach (campaign to date)

48,253



GRBZ

Name	Vineyard	Address	GRB Isomate Packs Approx.#	Acres
JD Dalton	Tsali Notch Vineyards	162 Harrison Road, Madissonville, TN 37354	6	35
Randy Givens	Fox Creek Vineyards	811 County Road, Sweetwater, TN 37874	3	15
Arrington Vineyards	Chase Viennuea	6211 Patton Road, Arrington, TN 37014	3	15
Walt Chism	Chism Vineyards	4893 Murfreesboro Rd. Arrington, TN 37014	1	8
Bart Horton	Century Farm	1548 Lower Brownsville Rd, Jackson, TN 38301	1	6
Larry Snyder	Beua Monde	1300 Pleasant Hill Rd, Martin, TN 38237	1	6
Erich Winter	N/A	6470 Cedar Creek Road, Greeneville, TN 37743	1	6
David Talley	Pleasant Valley Vineyards	49 Orchard Hill Rd, Fayetteville, TN 37344	1	6
Susan Gass	Sandy Ridge Vineyards	1820 Indian Creek Road, Dandrige, TN 37725	2	12
Donna Lane	Woodfeather Farms	3595 Clark Road, Lewisburg, TN 37091	1	6
Chuck Belt	Spout Spring Estates	430 Riddle Lane, Blaine, TN 37709\	1	6
Bill Sanderson	White Squirrel Winery	4385 US-45W, Kenton, TN 38233	1	5
Scott Fallhert	Crown Winery	3638 E Mitchell St., Humboldt, TN 38343	5	30
John Litz	Litz Farms	1255 Mayes Road, Morristown, TN 37813	7	42
Joel Moran	Revolution Springs	2488 Tom Anderson Road, Franklin, TN 37064	1	6
			34	204



Report to the Governor

Tennessee Wine and Grape Board
Calendar Year 2025

Prepared by the Tennessee Wine and Grape Board with support from the Tennessee Farm Winegrowers Alliance

Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Authorization No. NF4TV6-1, 200 copies, October, 2026. This public document was promulgated at a cost of $2.30 per copy.

TN.gov/Agriculture/department/business-development-division/wg-board

Report to the Governor

Tennessee Wine and Grape Board
Calendar Year 2025

The Tennessee wine and grape industry continued its strong upward momentum in 2025, marked by significant growth in the number of licensed wineries, expanded statewide distribution and record levels of consumer engagement.

Established under Tennessee Code Annotated 57-3-1101, the Tennessee Wine & Grape Board is charged with supporting the growth and long-term viability of the state's wine and grape industry by increasing the number of wineries operating in Tennessee, improving the quality of Tennessee-produced wines, promoting the industry, and implementing and maintaining a wholesaler rebate program. Throughout 2025, the Board made measurable progress toward each of these legislative mandates while strengthening the industry's contribution to rural development, tourism, and the state's economy.

INDUSTRY GROWTH

Industry expansion accelerated during the year with the addition of 15 new licensed wineries, bringing Tennessee's total to 92 wineries statewide. This growth continues a steady upward trend from just 61 licensed wineries in 2019 and reflects increasing entrepreneurial interest, expanding consumer demand, and growing recognition of Tennessee wines. Contributing factors include the continued popularity of agritourism, statewide marketing initiatives, and major wine festivals. Interest also continued to grow in wine business incubators and Alternating Proprietorship (AP) facilities, which provide aspiring winery owners with shared production space, equipment and technical expertise while reducing startup costs. Combined with expanded technical support from the University of Tennessee Institute of Agriculture (UTIA), these developments position Tennessee for continued growth in winery development and rural small-business investment.

UTIA continues to provide industry support through education and technical assistance. They have enhanced these efforts by hiring two positions: Fermentation Extension Specialist Dr. Stephan Sommer and Viticulturist Dr. Pierre Davadant. These positions fill critical needs in technical assistance and research capacity for Tennessee's wine industry. Together, they will provide growers and wineries with expertise in vineyard management, disease control, varietal evaluation, laboratory analysis, fermentation science and wine production. Their work will also strengthen educational programming, support the Tennessee Wine Quality Assurance Program and provide wineries across the state with consistent access to technical resources needed to improve wine quality and remain competitive.

Another significant investment in vineyard health during 2025 addressed the growing threat of the grape root borer (GRB), one of the most destructive pests affecting grape production. Grape root borers feed on the roots of grapevines, reducing vine vigor, lowering yields and potentially causing vine death. To help protect Tennessee vineyards, the Tennessee Wine & Grape Board provided funding to the Tennessee Farm Winegrowers Alliance to supply every commercial vineyard in the state with GRB-Z Isomate pheromone disruptors. This integrated pest management strategy disrupts the mating cycle of grape root borers, helping reduce pest populations while minimizing the need for insecticide applications. By supporting statewide adoption of this preventative approach, the Board made a proactive investment in vineyard sustainability, protecting growers' investments and strengthening the long-term productivity of Tennessee's grape industry.

The Tennessee Wine Quality Assurance Program (QAP) continued to serve as the state's primary quality benchmarking initiative in 2025. During the year, 41 wines were submitted for evaluation, with 29 wines meeting or exceeding the established quality standards. Participating wineries received official Tennessee Quality Assurance labeling and promotional support, helping reinforce consumer confidence while highlighting producers demonstrating excellence in winemaking. Although the program maintained consistent participation, opportunities remain to expand involvement in future years. Increased collaboration with UTIA's fermentation and enology specialists, along with enhanced outreach to wineries, will strengthen participation and further advance statewide quality standards.

Marketing and promotional initiatives significantly expanded the visibility of Tennessee wines throughout 2025. Statewide campaigns generated an estimated 6.5 million impressions through placements in the Tennessee Vacation Guide, Tennessee Ag Insider, Garden & Gun tourism cooperative advertising and StyleBlueprint Nashville digital campaigns. A comprehensive search engine optimization (SEO) audit, website improvements, and updated photography and video assets increased digital engagement by more than 400 percent, providing greater exposure for Tennessee wineries and wine tourism opportunities.

Wine festivals continued to serve as valuable promotional events while generating direct economic benefits for participating wineries. Festivals held in Chattanooga, Gatlinburg and Friendsville generated more than $117,000 in direct winery revenue, while the Sip Memphis Wine Festival attracted more than 500 attendees and introduced new consumers to Tennessee wines. Additional promotional efforts included the launch of new regional wine trails, particularly the Foothills and West Tennessee Wine Trails, and improved integration with the statewide Tennessee Wine Trail program. Looking ahead, the Board anticipates the approval of the Nine Lakes AVA in 2026 will become a defining milestone for Tennessee's wine industry by providing a nationally recognized viticultural identity that strengthens the state's reputation among consumers, retailers, and industry professionals.

The Wholesaler Rebate Program experienced unprecedented participation during 2025 and continued to demonstrate its value in expanding wholesale distribution and retail availability of Tennessee wines. Early in the year, the program distributed $22,546 in rebates supporting more than 1,100 cases of Tennessee wine. Following an adjustment of the reimbursement rate to $10 per case, participation increased substantially during the final quarter of the year. Six wholesalers and thirteen wineries participated during this period, resulting in rebates totaling $15,040 and supporting the distribution of 2,655 additional cases of Tennessee wine. While these results demonstrate the program's effectiveness, demand exceeded available funding multiple times throughout the year, underscoring the need for increased appropriations as more wineries and wholesalers participate in the program.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Rapid industry growth also created several strategic funding considerations. Continued expansion of the Wholesaler Rebate Program has increased demand beyond available resources, while statewide marketing initiatives require sustained investment to maintain Tennessee's growing visibility in an increasingly competitive marketplace. The Quality Assurance Program will benefit from additional educational programming and technical support, particularly through collaboration with UTIA's newly expanded viticulture and enology team. As the Tennessee wine industry continues to grow, additional investment will be necessary to sustain progress across all four statutory mandates while supporting the industry's expanding contributions to rural economic development, tourism and state and local tax revenues.

Overall, 2025 represented a milestone year for Tennessee's wine and grape industry. The addition of 15 new wineries, record participation in the Wholesaler Rebate Program, expanded statewide marketing efforts, successful recruitment of critical UTIA viticulture and enology specialists, and the availability of alternative proprietorship facilities collectively demonstrate the industry's continued growth and maturity. These accomplishments provide a strong foundation for future success while reinforcing Tennessee's position as an emerging wine-producing state.
To sustain this momentum, the Tennessee Wine & Grape Board recommends expanding funding for the Wholesaler Rebate Program, strengthening outreach and modernization of the Quality Assurance Program, maintaining high-performing statewide marketing initiatives and continuing support for UTIA's viticulture and fermentation programs. Additional investment in wine business incubators and Alternating Proprietorship facilities will further reduce barriers to entry for new wineries, encourage entrepreneurship and strengthen Tennessee's competitive position within the southeastern United States. Through continued collaboration among industry partners, educational institutions, and state government, Tennessee is well positioned to build upon the significant progress achieved in 2025 and ensure the long-term success of its wine and grape industry.

Sincerely,

The Tennessee Wine and Grape Board
Andy Holt, Tennessee Department of Agriculture Commissioner
Mark Ezell, Tennessee Department of Tourist Development Commissioner
Bill Sanderson, White Squirrel Winery, Kenton
Cary Cox, Tsali Notch Vineyard, Madisonville
Dr. Pierre Davadant, University of Tennessee Department of Plant Sciences
Yardley Swayer, Cades Cove Cellars, Townsend
Chase Vienneau, Arrington Vineyards, Arrington

The Quality Wine Initiative Tennessee

Technical Guidelines

Mission statement

The Quality Wine Initiative Program is an unbiased, independent, and collaborative effort between the Tennessee Wine and Grape Board, the Tennessee Farm Winegrowers Alliance (TFWA) and University of Tennessee Knoxville. Its mission is to strengthen the commercial viability of all wines produced in the State of Tennessee by providing a voluntary sensory evaluation to identify fault-free wines and educating consumers on wine quality.

Wine submission guidelines

All wines commercially produced in the State of Tennessee are eligible for the program, independent of the type or origin of the fruit used for fermentation. Wineries are encouraged to submit finished wines prior to bottling. If a wine fails to meet the quality expectations, it can be treated and resubmitted before it is packaged. The identity of all wine submissions will be analytically tracked at UTK to monitor resubmissions and changes that were made.

Submissions are collected throughout the year; however, blind tastings are only held four times a year (January, March, May, and August) at UT in Knoxville. Two 750-mL bottles (or equivalent volume for smaller bottles) of each wine are required for analytical and sensory evaluation. All submissions should be sent to:

University of Tennessee
Fermentation Service Laboratory
Att. Quality Wine Initiative
102 Food Safety and Processing (2600 River Drive)
Knoxville, TN 37996-4591

Submissions need to be accompanied by a payment of $15 per wine to cover administrative costs. In return, the winery will receive free access to the analytical and sensory data obtained for their wines.

Process description

Wine submissions are received by UTK and sorted into categories (sparkling wine, white wine, rose wine, red wine, dessert wine, fruit wine). Wines are then randomized within their category and assigned a number code to anonymize their identity. A tasting panel consists of three to five qualified, trained, and validated industry professionals and university employees

who have demonstrated the ability to identify wine faults and off-flavors correctly and reliably. The faults that were identified as most relevant to Tennessee's wine quality are haze/precipitation, oxidation, reduction, acetic acid, ethyl acetate, excess sulfur dioxide, and *Brettanomyces*/microbially impacted. All wines are evaluated individually first, followed by a panel discussion. A consensus within the panel is required to either pass or fail a wine. If no consensus can be reached, the wine is presented to a different panel. If a wine fails the program, the justification is confirmed by the Fermentation Service Laboratory and feedback is given to the winery. All wines that pass the evaluation are allowed to display the sticker of approval on the bottle.

Post-award management

The total production volume of each wine submitted to the program will be recorded. Wineries will be able to order as many stickers as bottles produced of wine that passed the sensory evaluation. The cost of the stickers will be carried by the winery. Stickers can only be displayed on wines that passed the program.

Getting involved

Wineries and winemaking professionals are encouraged to participate in the Quality Initiative program on multiple levels to enhance the public perception of Tennessee wine, demonstrate their dedication to quality, and educate consumers. Participation may consist of any or all of the following aspects:

- Submitting wines to the program to be evaluated
- Training to become a judge in the program
- Communicating with colleagues, retailers, and customers about the wine quality initiative

For more information



fermentation.tenneessee.edu


ssommer@utk.edu


(865) 974-2878



Quality Assurance Program Proposal

Stephan Sommer and Jonathan Ball

Background of the program

The Quality Wine Initiative Tennessee is an unbiased, independent, and collaborative effort between the Tennessee Wine and Grape Board, the Tennessee Farm Winegrowers Alliance (TFWA) and University of Tennessee Knoxville. Its mission is to strengthen the commercial viability of all wines produced in the State of Tennessee by providing a voluntary evaluation to identify fault-free wines and educating consumers on wine quality.

Two-stage evaluation →

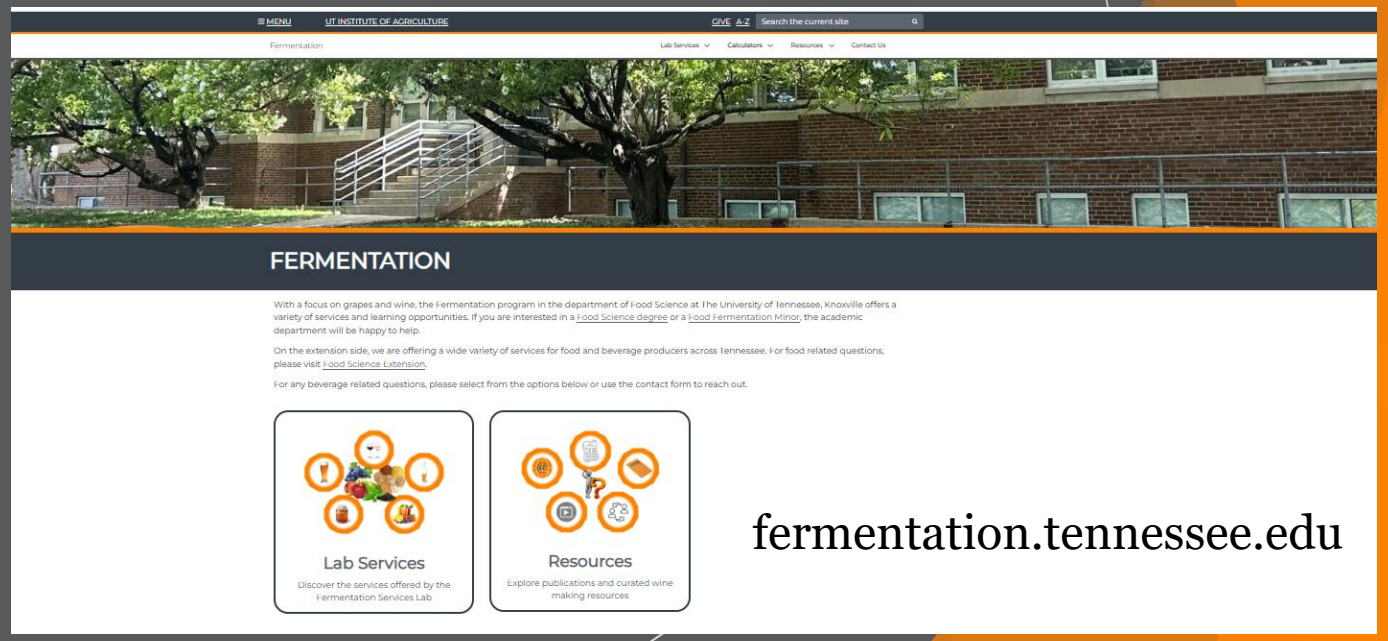
1. Blind tasting by trained panel
2. Analytical evaluation at UTK

UTEXTENSION
INSTITUTE OF AGRICULTURE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE

Submission process

- Similar to competition submissions
- 2 bottles of each wine
- Filled submission form (category, cultivar, vintage, # of cases)
- Payment ($15 per wine) included (if not covered by the board)
- Testing sessions four times a year

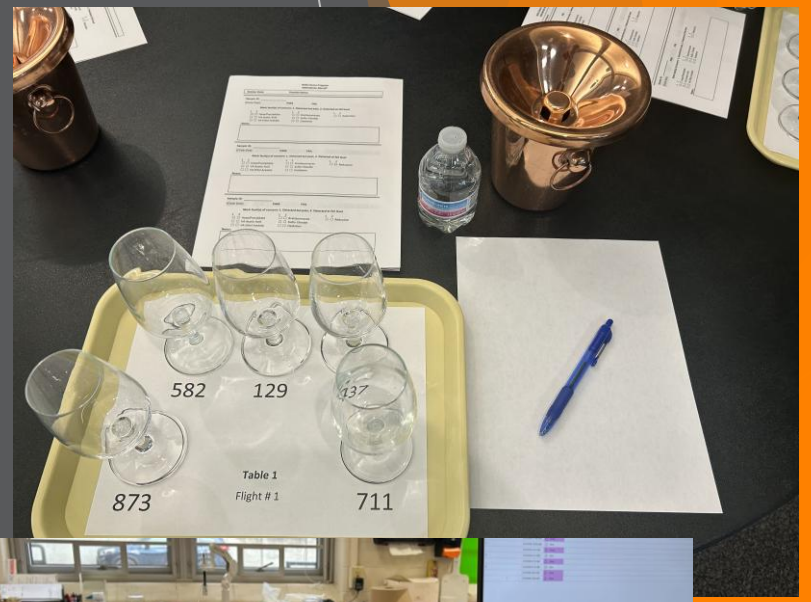
Can all be done online !!



fermentation.tennessee.edu

Tasting and testing

- At least two trained and validated panels (recognition of faults and off-flavors)
- Randomized blind tasting
- No stylistic fails, only with identifiable problem
- No consensus → second panel
- Analytical testing to confirm sensory
- Wines that pass → sticker awarded
- Failed wines → feedback to the winery
- Tank samples: passed → checked again after bottling
  failed → fix and resubmit
- Wines must fail for the right reason to provide reassurance to winemakers and consumers!





Feedback to the winery

- Sensory feedback from the panel
- Full spectrum of analyses
- Specific recommendations for each wine
- Follow up through extension

→ More efficient use of service lab
→ Communication tool between UTK and wine industry
→ Learning and improvement opportunity

Sample ID: _____

(Circle One): **PASS** **FAIL**

Mark fault(s) of concern: 1. Detected but pass, 2. Detected at fail level

1	2		1	2		1	2	
☐	☐	Haze/Precipitate	☐	☐	Brettanomyces	☐	☐	Reduction
☐	☐	VA Acetic Acid	☐	☐	Sulfur Dioxide			
☐	☐	VA Ethyl Acetate	☐	☐	Oxidation			

Notes:

Free SO_2	Total SO_2	Ethanol	Reducing sugar	Total Acidity	pH	Tartaric Acid	Malic Acid	Lactic Acid	Volatile Acidity	Result	# of stickers awarded
mg/L	mg/L	%	g/L	g/L		g/L	g/L	g/L	g/L		
21	196	9.8	36.1	4.2	3.91	0.0	1.6	4.5	0.22	pass	6700
21	134	12.7	22.8	7.3	3.70	0.0	6.6	1.4	0.25	pass	7200
17	69	12.2	2.2	6.7	3.27	1.0	4.0	0.1	0.10	pass	3300

Sticker ordering and marketing

- Approval notice allows sticker ordering
- External vendor, ~2 cents per sticker, wineries pay
- Manual or automated application on the bottle
- Customer brochures and flyers for tasting rooms
- Brand recognition through newsletters and emails
- Special events with awarded wines

- Recruiting winemaker as panelists → word of mouth
- Peer-pressure within the industry
- Consumer recognition
- Building credibility



Next steps and implementation

- If approved, training and website building can start
- Year one: → Recruiting panelists (industry and campus)
  → Panel training (at least 4 sessions)
  → Panel validation and test run
- Year two: → First testing round
  → Marketing campaigns
  → Phase out QAP?



- Implementation cost minimal
- Supplies and training wines
- No panelist reimbursement to keep cost low
- Wineries pay for testing and sticker → free up money in budget



Any questions?

Funding Request for the UT Viticulture Research Program

Tennessee Wine and Grape Board Meeting, October 21, 2026

Applicant: Dr. Pierre Davadant, University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Since August 2025, the University of Tennessee's viticulture program has launched eight research projects, including seven ongoing experiments in commercial vineyards, and established connections with 55 vineyards across Tennessee.

To support these efforts, the program hired Dana Landry as a Research Technician in December 2025. Dana brings nearly 18 years of agricultural research experience with USDA, LSU AgCenter, the University of Illinois, and the University of Tennessee. She has quickly established strong relationships with growers and plays a central role in coordinating field experiments and collecting scientific data. She is also pursuing a master's degree focused on characterizing Tennessee's vineyard climates (expected graduation in 2027).

Dana's position is currently funded through university startup funds, which also support vineyard infrastructure, research equipment, and summer interns. Our long-term objective is to fund her position through competitive external grants, primarily USDA. Temporary support from the Tennessee Wine and Grape Board would help bridge this funding gap, maintain ongoing research activities, and allow continued investment in the program's development.

Funding request: $20,143.48

Four months of salary and benefits ($5,035.87/month), to be used during the 2026–2027 fiscal year.

MEETING MINUTES

I. **Board, Commission, or Committee**: TN Wine and Grape Board

II. **Meeting Details**

Date: October 21, 2026

Time: 10 am CST

Location: Ellington Agriculture Center, Holeman Building

Street Address: 424 Hogan Rd

City: Nashville

State: TN **Zip:** 37220

Meeting Format and Public Access: In person and virtual

Microsoft Teams meeting
Click to join: Join the Wine and Grape Board Meeting now
Meeting ID: 243 736 153 478 334
Passcode: pn9XU7VL

Join the Wine and Grape Board by phone United States
Find a local number
Phone conference ID: 841 977 527#

Join on a video conferencing device
Tenant key: stateoftn@m.webex.com
Video ID: 115 667 563 1

III. **Call to Order and Quorum**
Time: 10:05 am CST
Presiding Officer: Chairman Bill Sanderson
Quorum Present: Yes

IV. **Roll Call & Attendance**
Members Present:

- Chairman Bill Sanderson
- Cary Cox
- Chase Vienneau
- Kacey Troup
- Melanie Beauchamp
- Dr. Pierre Davadant
- Yardley Sawyer

Members Absent: None

Other Persons Present:

- Emily Allison – TDA Counsel
- AC Paul Overholser – TDA

DRAFT

- AC Blake Ramsey - TDA
- Rachel Sullivan – TDA
- Jonathan Ball – TFWA
- Dr. Stephan Sommer – UT
- Dr. Dave Lockwood – UT
- Dr. Lisa Hanger
- Larry Hanger
- Payton Corlew

V. Approval of Previous Minutes

Motion to approve minutes from August 7, 2026:

- Motioned by: Melanie Beauchamp
- Seconded by: Cary Cox
- Voting method: roll call
  - For: 7
  - Against: 0
  - Abstain: 0
- Result: Carried
  - Individual roll-call votes:
    - Chairman Bill Sanderson - yes
    - Cary Cox - yes
    - Chase Vienneau -yes
    - Kacey Troup - yes
    - Melanie Beauchamp - yes
    - Dr. Pierre Davadant - yes
    - Yardley Sawyer -yes
- Conflict of Interest Disclosures, Recusals, or Abstentions: None

VI. Reports and Presentations

Status of Funds Report

- Presenter: Kacey Troup
- Summary: The board has an available balance of $120,155.54
- Action taken: None

VII. Old Business

Welcome to new board members

- The Board welcomed new board members and reviewed their board terms.
  - Chase Vienneau – term ends on 6/30/2027
  - Dr. Pierre Davadant – term ends on 6/30/2030
  - Cary Cox – term ends on 6/30/2017

Updates from Tennessee Farm Wine Growers Alliance

Jonathan Ball provided an update on the Quality Assurance program, the TN Wholesaler Rebate program, and the General Awareness Marketing campaign that TFWA is conducting on behalf of the Wine and Grape Board. As well as the Grape Root Borer Project.

- Quality Assurance Program (QAP):

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- Three new requests since the last meeting.
- Tennessee Wholesaler Rebate Program:
  - No wholesaler Rebates occurred in Q3 due to delays in finalizing the new contract.
- General Awareness Marketing Campaign:
  - 2026 Wine Festival Dates
    - Sip Townsend Balloon Wine Festival – August 15, 2026 saw 700 attendees. Each participating winery averaged $1,200 to $2,300 in revenue
    - Memphis Wine Festival – November 7, 2026
  - Continued efforts for statewide and regional wine trails. As well as digital and print marketing efforts for festivals, wine trails, and individual wineries.
- UT Wines Program offers TN wineries to co-brand with the University of TN while providing support for UT viticulture programs. Since the August meeting, an additional $6,100 has been generated for the Don Collier Viticultural Fund.
- The Grape Root Borer Project is showing success. The GRB Isomate has once again received Section 18 emergency approval from the EPA this year. 200 acres worth of GRBZ Isomate twisty ties have, along with monitoring traps, been distributed to vineyards across the state.

Annual Report the Governor

Kacey Troup shared the 2025 Annual Report with the board. It will be distributed to the Governor's office and members of TFWA.

VIII. New Business

Tennessee Wine Quality Assurance Program (QAP) Updates

- Dr. Stephan Sommer presented recommended changes to the QAP. These recommendations create the Quality Wine Initiative as an addition and eventual replacement for the current Quality Assurance Program. The new initiative involves a blind tasting and testing done by a trained panel to look for faults in the wine, as well as a lab analysis. This differs from the current program that involves wines placing at a certain level in competitions.
- Motion: To approve the Quality Wine Initiative as an addition and eventual replacement of the Quality Assurance Program.
- Motioned by: Cary Cox
- Seconded by: Melanie Beauchamp
- Voting method: roll call
  - For: 6
  - Against: 0
  - Abstain: 1
- Result: Carried
  - Individual roll-call votes:
    - Chairman Bill Sanderson - yes
    - Cary Cox - yes
    - Chase Vienneau -yes
    - Kacey Troup - yes
    - Melanie Beauchamp - yes
    - Dr. Pierre Davadant - yes
    - Yardley Sawyer -abstained
- Conflict of Interest Disclosures, Recusals, or Abstentions: Yardley Sawyer abstained due to her position on the TN Farm Winegrowers Alliance (TFWA) board; TFWA administers the QAP program.

DRAFT

Tennessee State Excise Tax

The board discussed state excise tax and created a committee to gather information from other states on how their excise tax is utilized and how other state wine and grape boards are funded. Committee members include Dr. Pierre Davadant, Yardley Sawyer, and Melanie Beauchamp.

University of Tennessee Viticulture Program Funding Request.

Dr. Pierre Davadant requested funding to help pay for a research technician. The board deferred this item to the next meeting.

2026 Annual Report to the Governor

Kacey Troup will draft the board's 2026 annual report and have a copy ready for approval at the next meeting.

IX. Public Comments

- Dr. Lisa Hanger introduced herself to the board and shared her support for the new Quality Wine Initiative

Next meeting will be January 13, 2027, from 10:00 am - 12:00 pm CST in the Holeman Building at Ellington Agricultural Center in Nashville, TN.

X. Adjournment

Time: 12:16 pm CST

- Motion to adjourn meeting.
- Motioned by: Cary Cox
- Seconded by: Melanie Beauchamp
- Voting method: roll call
  - For: 7
  - Against: 0
  - Abstain: 0
- Result: Carried
  - Individual roll-call votes:
    - Chairman Bill Sanderson - yes
    - Cary Cox - yes
    - Chase Vienneau -yes
    - Kacey Troup - yes
    - Melanie Beauchamp - yes
    - Dr. Pierre Davadant - yes
    - Yardley Sawyer - yes

Minutes Prepared by: Kacey Troup
Date: 10/23/2026

Minutes approved at meeting held on: [DATE]

DRAFT

Approval motion and result: [TEXT OR SUMMARY / RESULT]

DRAFT