

Institute supports growth of S. Oregon wine industry

By **CRAIG REED**
For the Capital Press

ROSEBURG, Ore. — The number of vineyards and wineries was slowly growing in the many valleys of Douglas County, Ore., but Scott Henry said he thought something was missing.

Henry was president of the Umpqua Valley Winegrowers Association, and he said the association finally decided the missing ingredient in the area's wine growth was education in viticulture and enology.

"We had been beating our heads wondering what we could do to improve our industry," said Henry, who founded Henry Estate Winery in 1978. "We looked around the country and saw that where the wine industry had thrived, there was a teaching facility.

"The more we looked into it, the more we talked to other industry members, the more we figured we could do it," he added.

Even while a capital campaign was underway to raise funds to build a teaching center on the Umpqua Community College campus 5 miles north of Roseburg, Chris Lake was hired as the director of the South-



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Chris Lake, director of the Southern Oregon Wine Institute at Umpqua Community College near Roseburg, Ore., is shown in the 2-acre vineyard that is part of the Danny Lang Teaching, Learning and Event Center in the background. The institute has been teaching students about enology and viticulture since 2008.

ern Oregon Wine Institute and began teaching classes in viticulture and enology in the fall of 2008.

There was plenty of support for the capital campaign, not only from the wine industry but from

many foundations, industrial groups and private entities. In eight months, \$2.5 million was raised. The college issued bonds to cover the rest of the expense and construction of a \$7 million, 24,000-square-foot facility

began in 2010. The Danny Lang Teaching, Learning and Event Center, named after a generous private donor from Roseburg, became operational in early 2012.

"Our models were wine centers at Walla Walla Com-

Southern Oregon Wine Institute

What: Danny Lang Teaching, Learning and Event Center — Classrooms, winery, tasting room, event center, offices and vineyard

Where: Umpqua Community College, 1140 Umpqua College Road, Roseburg, Ore. 541-440-4600

Education: One-year certificate in viticulture or two-year associate degree in enology and viticulture

munity College, Chemeketa Community College (in Salem, Oregon) and Napa Junior College in California," Lake said.

The bottom floor replicates a small to medium winery, there are classrooms and laboratories on the second floor, and an event center, a tasting counter and offices are on the third floor.

"We needed a building that implies we're going to make wine," Lake said. "We have to make a product that is desirable to the consumer who would want to buy it. And then we needed a tasting room where students can talk directly to consumers, ask them what kind of wine they want, whether white or red, bold or sweet. It's all part of the wine experience, from the ground up, dirt to glass."

Since 2010, the center has averaged 40 to 45 students in the program each year. They have ranged in age from 17 to 72. A one-year certificate in viticulture or a two-year associate degree in enology and viticulture can be earned.

The Southern Oregon Wine Institute, a division of Umpqua Community College, serves students from seven Southern Oregon counties, but a few students have also come from central Oregon and one woman in England took the online classes.

In the early years, the students visited local vineyards and wineries for the hands-on experience, but the 2-acre Scott Henry Vineyard on the southwestern

slope below the center was planted to Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir in 2013. Its first harvest will be in 2016. Another 2-acre block of different varieties is scheduled to be planted this fall.

"We want students to take some responsibility for managing the vineyard," Lake said. "Each student could be assigned a row and then it would be their responsibility to take it through to harvest."

Henry said the center is "more than I ever dreamed of."

"It's above and beyond anything I ever imagined," he said. "I think it has encouraged more wine development in the area."

Henry said he has hired some of the students, some part-time and some full-time, to work in his vineyard and winery.

"Before I was having to go to the employment department to get help and those people knew nothing about grapes, they just wanted a job," he said. "Now people who are educated for a couple years at the center are a big, big plus. I'm much more willing to pay more than minimum wage for somebody who actually has some knowledge about how to do things in the vineyard or in the winery. I don't have to train them and that's worth money for that capability."

In addition to teaching students, the center will also sublet space to local vineyards that want to make wine there. Two vineyards are scheduled to use the center's winery this fall.



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