

Valley vintners pleased with harvest

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The Illinois Valley grape harvest of 2016 seems to be, by reports from Foris, Deer Creek and Bridgeview, a resounding success. Due to early rains in the north end of the state, which resulted in watered down sugar contents, Southern Oregon may be ready for another round of awards when this year's wine is put to the test. The grapes are now in production and will be aged in barrels as they await the right moment to transfer the wine into individual bottles.

Ted Gruber, owner of Foris with 42 years of experience under his belt, remarked during the

interview that it was a "hot vintage" this time around. Further explicating he noted that the climate was a little warmer on average than usual but he is confident that this small problem will not greatly affect the quality of the Valley's wine when it hits the shelves.

In all, Foris harvested about 500 tons of grapes which was facilitated by dedicated teams of laborers that unfortunately had to be outsourced because of the vacuum created by marijuana trimming, which is harvested around the same time. Fortunately, Foris has infrastructure set up to support these migratory workers so their labor strength did not fall short of demand.

A new trick that was attempted this year at Foris, to great success,

was night picking.

This ensures that the raw grapes are cool when transferred over to the winemakers for pressing and can result in a better quality wine.

"It's taken a long time to figure out who we are," Gruber stated when asked about how many grapes they had to import this year. Some types of grapes just aren't fit to grow well in the Southern Oregon climate and this is amended, by buying grapes from out of the Valley. The knowledge and acceptance of geographical shortcomings took many years to pinpoint but the results of this experimentation have become apparent as the quality and popularity of Southern Oregon wine surges.

Two new wines will be on the shelves of Foris when they are deemed fit to sell. These two wines are a 2006 cabernet sauvignon tawny port to be released "soon" and a sweet gewürztraminer which, due to a trick used this year for higher sugar content, finally had success after a few attempts and will be available after the aging process is complete.

John Bryan, owner of Deer Creek, stated that the year went smoothly overall and everything appears, as of now, to be coming out well. In total, 3,000 cases of craft wine were put into production but 140 tons were harvested and the majority of that has been sold to Californian winemakers who will press and sell the product under their own brand.

Rene Eichmann, winemaker of 15 years at Bridgeview, stated that there was a point of contention earlier in the year with sugar contents being a little high but it was resolved as they caught up with nature and by harvest time the numbers were all nominal.

"The first day I call this a job, I'd move on and do something different," Eichmann remarked about the frantic workload winemakers have to endure when it's crunch time. In total, Bridgeview produced 450 tons of wine and all of their grapes go toward the production of their brand. Despite this, nearly 120 tons of grapes had to be imported from other sources to keep up with growing demand.

COUNTY . . .

Continued from A-5

Candidates were asked if they would be willing to use Economic Development money to promote cannabis tourism. Morgan said yes, and brought up the example of cannabis bed and breakfasts. "It could be an industry that people come here for. I just want them to keep going, though," she said. "I want tourism to be tourism, and don't want to be just this place where people come and don't work." Hunker referenced the example of Napa Valley and the tourism that comes from a boutique industry. "I think it's a little early to go for the tourism, but to study it and look at it and say, 'Hey, what could we do?'" I support that," he said.

Mancuso then asked the candidates their thoughts on the upcoming public

safety levy. Morgan, who has worked in law enforcement for 16 years, is very aware of the impact the lack of police presence has had on our county. She acknowledged that the levy will not solve all of our law enforcement problems, "But without it," she said, "we are going to be in a world of hurt. If this passes, we all still need to come to the table and figure out how to keep our rural areas safe. It's going to require us all to work together, even if the levy passes."

Hunker responded to the question by saying that the failure of previous levies had been positive for the county. By not receiving tax funding, he said, people had to come up with other options for public safety. He also suggested that if the people who had voted "yes" on the last levy had sent their money into the sheriff's department,

then the department would have \$5 million. "I am not going to vote for the levy," he said. "But I'll pay the \$400 that is my dues. I believe in our community, that we are willing to step up." He said that voters have not been willing to vote for the levies because they are not willing to put their homes at risk for county commissioners that they don't trust. "We are fixing a 30-year-old problem," Hunker said. "They saw this coming years and years and years ago, and they never did anything in this county. There has never been anybody who has said, 'How are we going to do this on our own without federal and state welfare?' because we should have been weaning ourselves for thirty

years, but we didn't." He then stated that he is confident that Secure Rural Schools Act money will come through.

Morgan, who works for the county, assured attendees that the county works hard to make sure that no one, especially elderly people, loses their home due to back-taxes.

She agreed that the failure of past levies had led to innovation and mentioned other programs that have been implemented to help with the public safety issue, such as the new sobering center in Grants Pass. "There have been other things that have been looked at, but they don't just happen over night," she said. "Our community is very resilient."

In closing, Hunker said, "We are at a crossroads. Either we start solving the problems we have today, or we can put them off, but we have put them off for years because we had funding and it was easy to do." He wants to explore the option of partnering the sheriff's department with private security companies. "There are things that we have never explored because we didn't have to. We have to start sweeping the corners of the room, gathering it all

up, seeing what we can do, and start doing it on our own instead of waiting for the magic to happen."

Morgan closed by saying, "I think that we are at a point that if we don't do something soon, there are parts that won't recover. We are at a point where we have to say that it's worth fighting for and that we have to do something different out here. I believe it means us coming to the table to figure out what we do next."

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A Response to Mr. Sitton's fabricated story

May I cast light on the fabricated story brought out by Mr. Sitton which was posted in Facebook. According to him, he has worked with me in the same building and there were two occasions that I did not cooperate in getting specialized jobs done. He also added that he found out that it is "usual" that I lack the ability to work with others.

First of all, he was probably referring to the 16-acre building of United Airlines which there were over 5,000 employees. My department there is highly complex with robotics and crew that are highly specialized in their field. Computers control the dismantling and assembly tracking process and I know that some were having a hard time and didn't understand the processes on how to upgrade parts status correctly. Anyone who could not distinguish a bus from a van could not have understood the complexity of the work. Nevertheless do not remember any occasion that a certain Michael Sitton came to me for any work assistance. If I knew him back then, why would he introduce himself to me when he came and bought a property here in Cave Junction? Why would he bother to inform me that he had also worked in United Airlines if I have a personal encounter with him at work before?

Second, I think Mr. Sitton has confused my company with another because I don't own buses. Modesty aside, I only own 38 fleet high luxury Dodge Vans (each unit has 14 high back seat) which

is the biggest privately owned Vanpool transportation that transports 500 employees to and from in the San Francisco Bay area. As a matter of fact, because of my service and contribution to transport 500 employees a day, the Air Quality Control Board gave me an award for my contribution. These vans were leased to FAA, Bank of America, Wells Fargo and by United Airlines. I also have my own service facility for all my transport units.



I do not wish to brag about my honest business and diligence with work. These are personal qualities that make up my backbone. But when somebody makes aspersions like "lining my pockets" with no tangible evidence, not even a credible story, causes anyone to think of the accuser's motive and integrity.

Mr. Sitton please do your homework well. Do these look like busses to you? (see photos) These are the kind of transportation I own. If you truly had given my drivers and my riders free ride for a number of times because my vehicles had broken down, then you could have seen the difference. Any grader can distinguish a bus from a van, unless, you are plucking your story from grapevine.

Third, he mentioned my wife

and the complaints about the houses we built. Let me say it straight to him because he seems confused again. Adair Homes built those homes and they would not have passed inspections and would have been shut down by both State and Federal agencies if they were not in compliance with standards. The State and Federal regulations are strict on issuances of building permits and licenses, so I hope you realize that you are undermining the people who implement these laws and their agencies. And, if the renters were complaining about the quality of the homes they rent, how come there were no complaints to Adair Homes from the owners themselves? There should have been filed complaints so that they could be properly addressed. But I guarantee you, that if the renters of those homes would leave, those homes will be rented the next day.

For your information Mr. Sitton, the former Mayor Tony Paulson benefited from the "quality" of construction by Adair Homes when he lost his house because of foreclosure. He came to us for help and we had to go out of our way to talk to one owner so he can rent his home to him.

You seem to have a penchant for interviewing people for stories about me and convoluting them all. You are getting confused by your own doing! My intelligent constituents know that legitimate issues are not based on hearsays and speculations.

Fourth, you claim that you have lived here since the time I was Mayor and you didn't see changes that mattered. Well, it's because you didn't attend council meetings and didn't bother to know what goes on then. You

were living peacefully and comfortably because the law and order that I worked hard for, prevailed those days.

So Mr. Sitton, I am not sorry that I did not meet your expectations because you do not represent the people of Cave Junction. You are just one individual who would like to impose your will to the people by maligning a candidate that you do not support. For that alone, I feel sorry for you because it is obvious that this is an orchestrated attack by your group and my opponet!

You ask about my voluntary contribution to my community? FYI again, I have served in Josephine County's various committees and donated gas money for our CJ Patrol to whom I am very grateful for the job they do. How about you? What have you done to help this city???

I was also told that our incumbent mayor was spreading rumors that he does not want me to be mayor because I will terminate all employees. That's outrageously ridiculous! I think that our sitting mayor has confused me for Tony Paulson who terminated an employee and the city paid \$50,000 for the wrongful discharge.

Lastly, I am running again for mayor to help fix the problems and do the best for our city. I am concerned about law and order because when I decided not to seek re-election we have deputies. I was able to eliminate transients with open container on the streets but now we are back to the same problems: burglaries of residences and businesses, drugs and auto theft.

Mr. Sitton I don't need to line my pockets, I have enough. Maybe it is your pockets that are empty!

Don Moore