



NEWS RELEASE

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From Grape Business to Wine Business Came Miletta Vista Winery

St. Paul, Neb., October 8, 2008—St. Paul grape producers Mick and Loretta McDowell contemplated wine making. Why not capture the revenue of the wine produced from their grapes? Why not bring a winery home to Central Nebraska where wineries are sparse? Rural Development funding helped Mick and Loretta with their business venture decision.

“Rural Development provided a Value Added Producer Grant of \$84,370 to the McDowells for working capital,” stated Kelley Messenger, area specialist for USDA Rural Development. “With the grant and matching funds from the McDowells, inventory needed for making and bottling wine was purchased along with office equipment and supplies to support the processing and marketing. A marketing campaign was conducted and salaries of the processing and marketing personnel and the utilities for the processing facility were covered.”

Mick and Loretta started with 820 vines in 2003, added 500 vines in 2004 and 100 concord vines in 2006. The grapes were sold to an existing winery 113 miles away, a five hour delivery trip, for \$0.50 per pound of produce. Today, Miretta Vineyards & Winery, Inc. (*DBA Miletta Vista Winery*, milettavistawinery.com), has greatly increased its’ revenues by processing their eight varieties of grapes into bottled wine. The winery brought 15 part-time jobs to a rural community of more than 2,200 residents.

Since the opening of Miletta Vista, over 4,500 new customers from 26 states and 5 foreign countries have visited. The grant funds expended for marketing the winery helped recognize them as an area attraction and allowed them to penetrate the market in areas over 100 miles away.

“The grant funds were essential to our start-up, specifically for advertising throughout the region, which has helped increase our customer base,” stated Mick and Loretta McDowell, Miretta Vineyards & Winery, Inc.

Located four miles north of St. Paul, Miletta Vista Winery is perched high on a hill overlooking the Loup River Valley. The winery hosts many different events including weddings, birthday parties, special dinners, music events, and wine tasting lunches. Miletta Vista Winery’s list of events continues to grow with reservations being made into the next operating year.

For information on the Value Added Producer Grant program contact Kelley Messenger, (308) 237-3118, kelley.messenger@ne.usda.gov, 4009 N. 6th Avenue, Ste 1 Kearney, Neb.

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