



Off the NewsVine
January 12, 2019

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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Association Administration

Members in good standing received an electronic ballot on Monday, January 7 to elect open board positions for 2019. One ballot went to each member organization and will be weighted depending upon that members class (small, medium, large or professional). **Ballots will close on January 31.** The vote will be certified by the past president, or his representative, and results published in this newsletter in early February. To check member status or report a missing ballot, please contact katie@twgga.org.

Biographies for nominees can be found on the TWGGA website: <https://www.txwines.org/board-of-directors>

New board members will be installed at the annual **member meeting** of the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association on Thursday, February 21 at 9 a.m. at the Embassy Suites Hotel in San Marcos, Texas.

The **TWGGA board of directors will meet** on Wednesday, February 20 also at the Embassy Suites Hotel in San Marcos, Texas. Both former and newly elected board members will be present. Board meetings are open to the public. In the near future, updated guidelines for visitors will be posted to the TWGGA webpage.

Annual Conference

Since the last newsletter, there has been additional content added to the TWGGA Annual Conference webpage. Most notably, a schedule, sponsor lists and exhibitor lists have all been posted.

<https://www.txwines.org/annual-conference-2019>

Early registration for the Annual Conference of the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association will end on January 31. Programming, trade show and dining event **fees will increase** for both members and non-members.

TWGGA Regional Town Hall Meetings at Annual Conference - Request for Discussion Topics

Regional Town Hall Meetings will be hosted at the Annual Conference on Thursday, February 21 at 2 p.m. These meetings will facilitate member feedback on a wide range of topics pertinent to the industry's strategic growth. Please respond to this e-mail with suggested topics for the Regional Town Hall Meetings.

Legislative and Regulatory

TABC Sunset Update

By Kyle Frazier

On Wednesday January 9, the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission held its final meeting for this cycle. During that meeting, decisions were made regarding the various recommended changes to the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission and related state code. Most of the recommendations put forth by the Sunset Commission were adopted with minimal changes. Very few of these changes will impact the wine industry directly.

Based on the recommendations adopted by the Sunset Committee, a bill will be drafted by the legislative council and will be filed in both the Texas house and Texas senate. The sunset bill will move through the normal processes like any other piece of legislation. TWGGA staff will continue to monitor this legislation to ensure there are no amendments that will negatively impact the wine and grape industry.

Pertinent to the wine industry was the adoption of the recommendation to remove duplicate or unused permits and licenses in the code, specifically the Agent's Permit, among others. Assuming the Sunset bill becomes law and removes the Agent's Permit from the code, wineries will no longer need to maintain Agent's permits for their staff members. This recommendation came from both the TABC and Sunset staff.

Senator Buckingham and Representative Rodriguez File 35,000 Gallon Cap Bill

Without input from the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association, Senator Dawn Buckingham and Representative Eddie Rodriguez filed bills that would remove the 35,000-gallon cap on off-premise consumption wine sold by Texas wineries.

Both legislators report being interested in addressing injustices and imbalances in the Texas alcoholic beverage code. The TWGGA legislative committee has recommended to the TWGGA board that the Association support these bills. The TWGGA board will vote next week.

Texas Legislature Online – Public Information on Bills Filed

The State of Texas offers a free service to the public - Texas Legislature Online (TLO) <https://capitol.texas.gov/>

TLO is a portal that allows the user to follow activities during the Texas legislative session. Users can search bills in multiple ways, track the progress of bills and search current Texas statutes. Live and recorded video coverage of committee and House and Senate floor proceedings are also available. TWGGA highly encourages members to become familiar with and use this valuable service.

Legislative and Regulatory Continued

Upcoming Pertinent Dates for the Upcoming 86th Legislative Session

January 14 th	LBB Budget estimates are delivered
January 15 th	Governor and Lt. Governor Inauguration
March 4 th	TWGGA Wine Day at the Capitol
March 8 th	Last day to file bills and resolutions
May 27 th	Last day 86 th Legislative Session (Sine Die)

Lone Star International Wine Competition

The Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association will continue to host the Lone Star International Wine Competition. The call for wines will be distributed in March 2019. Judging will happen in June 2019. Stay tuned for more information.

Miscellaneous

Texas Winery App Hiatus and Redesign

In an effort to better connect consumers and wineries, the Texas Winery App will undergo a redesign this Spring. To facilitate this redesign and use Association resources wisely, the current App will no longer be available beginning February 1.

To provide feedback about the redesign or the lapse in availability, please e-mail Katie@twgga.org with the following subject line: Texas Wine App Hiatus

100% Texas Grown Emblem Update – Board Votes to Provide Emblem Program to Industry

As previously reported, TWGGA has trademarked a 100% Texas Grown Emblem for use on wine labels to indicate when a bottle of wine has been produced from 100% Texas grapes. Solicitation was solicited from members of the industry through this newsletter. Based on that feedback, the TWGGA board voted to provide this program to all members of the Texas wine and grape industry. There will likely be pricing consideration for members of the Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association. Stay tuned for additional information.

Submit Blog Posts for the TWGGA Website

The TWGGA website homepage features a blog. Scroll down on the homepage to view – <https://www.txwines.org/>.

According to TWGGA web designer, Travis Matheny of Digital Brand Makeover, blog posts can significantly increase search engine optimization. Blogs are “most often seen or discovered by visitors new to a website,” says Matheny.

Blog content should contain text and a related picture. Possible blog topics are, but not limited to:

- new winery opening or new vineyard planting,
- winery or vineyard expansion,
- new equipment for winemaking or grape growing,
- any information about food, wine, grapes or pairings of interest to the consumer.

To submit a potential blog post for the TWGGA webpage, please e-mail both text and picture to katie@twgga.org. Any controversial posts will be evaluated by the TWGGA executive committee.