

OUR TOWNS Cedar County

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Success Ferments At Hartington Winery

Nissens See Fruits Of Their Labors Pay Off In Business

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HARTINGTON, Neb. — They're hard at work in the vineyards of Nissen Winery.

After a wet growth season, the fields north of Hartington are lined with white plastic buckets filled with grapes, slightly ahead of schedule.

"Usually we break bud around the first of May.

That's when you start to see the green growth pop out," said co-owner Tim Nissen.

"The typical harvest season starts mid-August ... and it runs into mid-to late September. This year we're probably five or six days ahead. Last year we were probably a week and a half behind."

While north-eastern Nebraska may not seem like most people's idea of a prime vineyard location, Nissen said the summers can be very conducive to the growth of quality grapes.

"We like to see a lot of variance in temperature from nights to days," he said. "This year, we haven't had a whole lot of extremes. We're starting to get to them, and that's when our grapes will start to pick up a lot more flavor."

Rainfall also plays a role. "All the moisture in the spring rains prevented some pollination, so it's not a real full crop, but it's a good-quality fruit," said co-owner Dave Nissen. "The quantity isn't quite as high, but the quality

is good. ... It's been awful wet this summer for grapes, but they've been doing pretty good."

Since it started on two acres in the spring of 2003, the vineyard has expanded to 12 acres with approximately 6,400 vines that grow both wine and table grapes. A second vineyard is located along the Highway 12/57 junction.

"The first year or two was more of an experiment to see

to deter pests from eating them, including a loudspeaker that projects bird calls to keep smaller birds away.

"It works about three weeks," Nissen said. "We're kind of got to time our placing and picking to keep the birds away, but it's pretty effective."

Grapes with a longer period of growth are wrapped in round baler mesh.

"We've been netting our red grapes simply because they take longer to mature, and the squawkers won't keep the birds off that long," Nissen said.

"We can get by with the squawkers on a white grape. They mature much faster. But the reds will hang another two to three weeks for sure, and the birds would just destroy them."

Insects are another concern. "You can have worms from time to time. (And) grasshoppers. We really haven't had

any problems with those, so we feel pretty fortunate," Nissen said. "Most of our issues come through fungus, with all the moisture. ..."

"We're most susceptible to mildew," he said. "Downy mildew is probably our biggest concern. That's something we do a bunch of side programs for. Once you get on that program, it works quite well."

The Nissens started their vineyards and winery due to a



TRAVIS GULBRANDSON/P&D
Members of the Mount Marty College volleyball team pick grapes at the vineyard owned by Dave and Tim Nissen last week. The Nissens expect harvest season to conclude mid-way through September.

what grows," Tim Nissen said.

"The grapes we thought would do best here didn't necessarily, so we had to find grapes that work with our site so we could partner with Mother Nature a little bit to get the perfect grape."

Maintaining the vineyards is a year-long process.

Starting in January, the vines are pruned, a process that continues to mid-April.

Once the grapes begin to grow, several methods are used



TRAVIS GULBRANDSON/P&D
Dave and Tim Nissen, owners of Nissen Winery, display some Cayuga White grapes in their vineyard, just north of Hartington, Neb.

number of factors. Among them, Dave Nissen wanted to be closer to home, doing something the utilize his degree in horticulture.

"So we just kind of put all these pieces together and it led us to wine-making," Tim Nissen said. "We had the land resources. For grape-growing, you prefer a south slope if you can get it, and we've got some beautiful hills that are excellent for that. ..."

"It's something we've practiced for quite a while, and something we've grown into. But I think with life, if you keep an open mind and you're willing to learn, you can do anything you want to," he said.

For more information, visit www.nissenwine.com.

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The advertised beer special in our circular today is incorrect. This is the correct special. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused you.

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EMS Workshop To Be Offered In Hartington

HARTINGTON, Neb. — The Emergency Medical Services Program of the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services will offer a workshop on "Cardiac Emergencies" for emergency medical technicians and first responders. The workshop will be held at the Hartington Ambulance Hall on Tuesday, Sept. 14, running from 7-10 p.m.

The workshop is worth three continuing education hours.

For more information, contact Carrie Crawford, Northeast Nebraska Emergency Medical Specialist, at 1-877-227-3609.

New Cabins For Scholars At Neb.'s Fossil Beds Park

ROYAL, Neb. (AP) — New cabins at Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park near Royal are making the hard work of paleontology more comfortable.

Each of three cabins has a common living area and kitchen, a bathroom and private bedrooms. They'll be used by visiting students and scholars but are not open to the public.

The \$263,000 project was funded by the Theodore F. and Claire M. Hubbard Family Foundation of Omaha through its donation to the University of Nebraska Foundation.

Hartington Receives Funds For Housing, Infrastructure Development

LINCOLN, Neb. — The Nebraska Department of Economic Development has awarded \$400,000 in Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Funds to the City of Hartington to develop infrastructure and seven homes within Phase 1 of the new Westfield Acres residential housing subdivision.

Four of the units within the subdivision will be built for four qualified low- to middle-income homebuyers earning at or below 100 percent of the Area Median Family Income. Homebuyer assistance will be available to those applicants that are selected for the project.

The city is working with the Hartington Community Economic Development Corporation on this phased housing development that will include 38 total developed lots during the next 12-15 years. The city's housing plan calls for an average 2.5 homes to be built each year in the new subdivision. Each lot will have city sewer and water, paving, and electrical, gas and phone/cable hookups.

An additional \$1,378,803 from the City of Hartington and the Hartington Community Economic Development Corporation includes funds from lot sales, Tax Increment Financing, sales tax revenue generated through LB 840, the Local Municipal Option Tax, and private investments will complete the project.

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