



**GO TEXAN.**

Big State. Big Backyard.  
Come Play.

October 2008

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE • COMMISSIONER TODD STAPLES

# FRUIT *of the* VINE YIELDS JOB BOOM

*From Todd Staples, Commissioner  
Texas Department of Agriculture*

Family farming has long been a Texas tradition. Today, more than 280 family-owned farms covering 3,100 acres cultivate an unexpected crop—grapes. Texas is the fifth-largest wine producer in the country. The industry contributes more than \$1.35 billion a year to the state's economy and supports nearly 9,000 agri-tourism jobs.

The growth in wineries across the state is part of a rural tourism trend nationwide. From north of Amarillo then south to the heart of Poteet, boutique vineyards and community wine festivals offer consumers an interactive experience and a taste of the best of Texas.

Visit [www.gotexanwine.org](http://www.gotexanwine.org) to learn more about weekend wine get-aways and wine trail tastings. Then give us a call at (877) 99GO-TEX if we can help you grow your own variety of tourism.

Together, we preserve the past, celebrate the present and anticipate the future of rural Texas.

*Todd Staples*

For more information visit [www.gotexan.org](http://www.gotexan.org), call (877) 99GO-TEX or e-mail [ruraltexas@tda.state.tx.us](mailto:ruraltexas@tda.state.tx.us).

## QUALITY CULTIVATES SUCCESS

"You have to work with what you have." While that may be the reality every farmer faces in maximizing yields each year, this truism belies a sharp focus on quality—key to cultivating success and boosting rural tourism, according to physician and vintner Pat Brennan of Brennan Vineyards just outside Comanche in Central Texas.

What began as a hobby for Dr. Brennan and wife, Trellise, with the first five acres of grapes planted near the old stone farmhouse at their weekend retreat in 2002, has grown into "big" business and a tourism destination.

Along with a tasting room and gift

shop, the 3,700-square-foot events center completed in 2006 at Brennan Vineyards includes a full commercial kitchen, dining hall and event space that can accommodate up to 200 people. Visiting chefs prepare gourmet meals paired with specially selected wines for corporate retreats, weddings, concerts and other social events.

Brennan Vineyards' 2006 Viognier won the Grand Star Award as the best Texas white wine at the Lone Star International Wine Competition and a Silver Medal at the Indy International Wine Competition.

According to Brennan, the vineyard's location at the junction of the state's two most acclaimed winemaking and tourism regions, the Hill Country and Texas High Plains, and the rolling topography, rich soil, warm days and semi-dry growing season all combine to yield a diverse selection of varieties that thrive in the Lone Star climate.

Simply put, good grapes and good wines translate into good sales—and a growing tourism business.

"The most effective marketing tool that has helped us attract visitors is making excellent wine and being recognized as doing so by our peers," Brennan said. "We are not in a high tourist area, so people have to seek us out. We have been very successful with our wines in competitions and have been favorably reviewed by writers and critics. The Texas Department of Agriculture has also been very helpful in promoting our wine as well as all Texas wine."

To find out about TDA's wine marketing program, go to [www.gotexanwine.org](http://www.gotexanwine.org). Visit Brennan Vineyards at [www.brennanvineyards.com](http://www.brennanvineyards.com).



# RETIRING BOOMERS: TURN SILVER TO GOLD



Some 77 million baby-boomers nationwide represent pure gold—\$2.3 trillion in annual spending power. And as retirement nears, more are looking at small towns and the Lone Star State for their next home.

Want to shine the spotlight on your community? The GO TEXAN Certified Retirement Community Program provides a “stamp of approval” assuring retirees each certified community has demonstrated it can meet the living, employment/volunteer, health, entertainment, education and safety needs of its citizens and visitors.

To become a certified retirement community, each community must complete an application process including a

retiree desirability assessment. Applications are reviewed and scored by an independent advisory committee of volunteers experienced in community and economic development.

For more information and to apply, visit [www.retireintexas.org](http://www.retireintexas.org).



## GO TEXAN Rural Community Team

We're ready and set to GO TEXAN!  
Have questions? We're here to help.  
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## \$STARS and BUCKS

Hometown STARS and Bootstrap Bucks funding is open to all GO TEXAN Rural Community certified members to help alleviate advertising costs associated with tourism events.

Recent Hometown STARS awards went to the cities of Bandera, Bastrop, Clifton, Jacksonville, Madisonville, Yorktown and Brewster County.

### STARS Third Round

Deadline for Submission 10/31/2008

### STARS Fourth Round

Deadline for Submission 1/31/2009

Recent Bootstrap Bucks awards went to the cities of Bandera, Bastrop, Calvert, Eden, Gainesville, George West, Honey Grove, Jacksonville, Linden, Llano, Luling, Madisonville, Ralls, Rusk, Winters and Uvalde County.

### Bucks Fifth Round

Deadline for Submission 10/31/2008

### Bucks Sixth Round

Deadline for Submission 11/30/2008

For STARS and Bucks applications, go to [www.gotexan.org](http://www.gotexan.org), Rural Community Program and click on “Member Corner.”

## REGIONAL TOURISM WORKSHOPS

The GO TEXAN Rural Community Program works in partnership with the Texas Travel Industry Association to conduct rural tourism and marketing workshops across the state. For upcoming dates, go to [www.gotexan.org](http://www.gotexan.org), Rural Community Program, and click on “Workshops.”

## HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRAPEVINE

*The New York Times* named the Texas Hill Country as the top travel destination: “Who needs Europe? The Texas Hill Country, west of Austin and north of San Antonio, might be the next best thing to crossing the Atlantic. The region is lush, colorful ... Moreover, the region is speckled with 22 wineries that buzz with food and music festivals year round.” — *The New York Times*, June 1, 2008

## POST YOUR EVENTS ONLINE

To add your community event to the GO TEXAN Rural Community online calendar, e-mail Natalie Houghton at [natalie.houghton@tda.state.tx.us](mailto:natalie.houghton@tda.state.tx.us).



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