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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Grand Gala Set to Raise Money to Fund City
Revitalization:
*2005 Projects Nearing Completion***

SEATTLE, Wash. – (June 14, 2006) – Washington Wine Country, the non-profit consortium known for promoting wine-related tourism and economic development in Eastern Washington, will once again be raising money towards their City Revitalization Fund at this year's Grand Gala auction and benefit dinner on June 24, 2006. Through the fund, money will be granted to cities within the Eastern Washington wine appellations to fund revitalization projects related to wine country tourism.

The City Revitalization Fund, which originated last year, began with over \$34,000 raised at the 2005 Grand Gala. Last fall, Washington Wine Country granted funds to two cities towards revitalization projects. The first and largest grant went to the City of Richland where a monument sign is being constructed to recognize a growing cluster of wine business. The second project funded was with the City of Kennewick. As of this week, over 100 Washington Wine Country avenue banners will be lining the streets of the highest tourist area in the Tri-Cities. Banners begin on Clearwater Avenue, go down Columbia Center Boulevard and into the Three Rivers Entertainment District and Convention Center. Both projects assist in preserving the history and promoting the lifestyle and romance found within Washington's Wine Country.

"Being at the epicenter of Washington Wine Country, we're delighted to have the wine country banners in place celebrating our regions growing prominence in the wine industry," stated Ken Nelson, Director of Economic Development for the City of Kennewick. "Shoppers, tourists, conventioners, and visitors to our area will be reminded to tour some of the world's best wineries and savor the local bounty during their stay."

The 2006 selection process, to begin this fall, will once again be based on location, demonstrated need and ability to implement and support improvements. In addition to these factors, cities who apply are expected to provide a source or sources of matching funds either in the form of direct cash contributions or partial in-kind services and contributions.

Washington Wine Country's primary fundraiser is the annual Wine Country Celebration and Grand Gala, and will be held on June 23 - 24, 2006. Washington Wine Country will hold a "Raise the Paddle" benefit during the Grand Gala auction to allow auction goers an opportunity to contribute to this beautification campaign. Those interested in donating or applying can contact Communications and Auction Director Jackie Walsh at jwalsh@winecountrywashington.org or (206) 285-0514.

Formed in 2003, Washington Wine Country is a non-profit association of Eastern Washington businesses promoting wine-related tourism, economic development and recognition of the world-class wine-growing region comprising the Yakima Valley, Columbia Valley, Walla Walla Valley and Red Mountain and the newer

appellations of Columbia Gorge, Horse Heaven Hills, Rattlesnake Hills and the Wahluke Slope.
www.winecountrywashington.org

*The first of its kind, **Wine Country Celebration** has events at wineries within the wine growing appellations and gives visitors the opportunity to dine with winemakers in their wineries, golf, enjoy the sounds of classic jazz and taste the terroir of the various appellations of Washington wine. In the midst of this weekend lies the romantic and exclusive Grand Gala auction and benefit dinner at a heralded estate overlooking the Yakima Valley. www.winecountrycelebration.com*

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