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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Wine Country Celebration & Grand Gala - a Sell Out Weekend**  
*“Raise the Paddle” Generates \$40,000 for City Revitalization Fund*

YAKIMA, Wash. - (June 26, 2006) - That’s right, it was a sell out! The Wine Country Celebration’s exciting weekend of events, which included a golf tournament, a VIP jazz concert, four winemaker dinners and the Grand Gala auction and benefit dinner, brought more than 500 people into Washington Wine Country and grossed \$420K to boot.

The Grand Gala auction and benefit dinner capping this weekend’s Wine Country Celebration raised \$192,175 through its auctions. A “Raise the Paddle” auction alone generated \$42,600 from 50 donors for the organization’s program to fund city revitalization projects in Washington’s wine towns. The fund is now in its second year.

“Each year gets better and better,” said Janet Leduc, the event’s founding director. “It’s gratifying to see such enthusiasm and support from the community, both for our state’s vineyard region and the projects we support.”

Almost two-thirds of the auction total, \$125,450, was raised in a live auction conducted by veteran auctioneers Dick and Sharon Friel. Among the highlights were:

- A Wine Safari on Red Mountain for 40 people featuring a dinner in the vineyards celebrating Crush prepared by Chef Jarrett Messenger of Columbia Hospitality and wines from Fidelitas, Hedges Cellars and Hightower (**\$15,000**).
- Participation in any step of the production of a personalized barrel of Three Rivers Winery wine with varietals from Champoux, Boushey, Milbrandt and Sagemoor Farms (**\$13,000**).
- A sand carved and 23 Karat Gold engraved 6 Liter Bottle of DeLille Cellars 2003 Chaleur Estate, Red Mountain wine - Robert Parker’s infamous 95 Points (**\$6,500**).

“As a winemaker in wine country, we really enjoy the support of businesses and organizations like Washington Wine Country,” said Kay Simon of Chinook Wines, the event’s Honorary Vintner Chair. “This evening is an amazing grass roots effort that allows people in the community, including winemakers and growers, to give back to the vineyard region of the state.”

Washington Wine Country’s City Revitalization Fund will once again contribute to historic preservation projects and promote investment and tourism within Washington Wine Country

communities. Donors who participated in the “Raise The Paddle” were able to contribute towards projects that promote signage development and tourism awareness.

It was a lavish evening for some 200 guests at the DeAtley estate who arrived to stroll the estate’s expansive lawns, visit the wine-tasting tents, taste hors d’oeuvres and inspect the silent auction items.

Vicky McCaffree, Executive Chef of the Yarrow Bay Grill in Kirkland, commanded a kitchen crew that turned out a sumptuous, five-course sit-down dinner: roasted red pepper soup with shellfish ceviche, copper river salmon, Kobe filet with summer truffles and an amazing chocolate finale with fresh berries. Each course was accompanied by award-winning Washington wines.

The popular 13 piece Seattle band, Type A, performed after the auction providing Gala goers an opportunity to dance the night away with an amazing view of a star-lit Yakima Valley.

**Editors Note: Photos are available on request.**

**Fundraising Breakdown: Sponsorships \$40,500; Event Tickets (Golf Classic, Vintner dinners, Seasons jazz concert) \$31,125; Grand Gala Tickets \$155,750; Raise the paddle \$42,600; Centerpieces \$6,175; Live Auction \$125,450; Silent Auction \$17,950.**

*Washington Wine Country is a non-profit association of Eastern Washington businesses dedicated to building pride, recognition and economic vitality in 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](http://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](http://www.winecountrycelebration.com)*

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