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Wine Country Celebration & Grand Gala a Smashing Success *"Raise the Paddle" Generates \$62,000 for Regional Partnership Fund*

YAKIMA, Wash. – (June 28, 2007) – Now in its fifth year, the Wine Country Celebration and Grand Gala was a weekend of success boasting over 560 attendees at six events and grossing \$475K towards its mission-related programs, the largest amount raised to date. Guests departed the Grand Gala auction with a message to remember, "What's raised in Washington's wine country, stays in wine country."

The Wine Country Celebration raised a record breaking \$73K in Sponsorships and capping the weekend's festivities, the Grand Gala Benefit Dinner and Auction, raised \$375,000 through its auctions and ticket sales. A "Raise the Paddle" auction for Washington Wine Country's new Regional Partnership Fund generated \$62K from 48 donors. Together, these figures represent record numbers and a huge boost in commerce and regional support.

"This year was once again a tremendous success," said Janet Leduc, Washington Wine Country's Founding Director. "After five years, this region wide event continues to gain momentum and unite commerce and partners to promote the region and its treasures."

Over one-half of the auction total, \$126,000, was raised in a live auction conducted by veteran auctioneers Dick and Sharon Friel. Among the highlights were:

- An exquisite five course dinner with some of the world's legendary Winemakers in the home of the Allen and Kathleen Shoup's Seattle home in the Highlands (**\$18,000**).
- Treasures from a collectors cellar, a magnificent collection of 18 etched and hand painted "Ducks Unlimited" magnums (**\$11,000**).
- A Tuscan themed harvest dinner for 20 people atop the grounds of the new Vineyards Resort (**\$10,000**).
- A one-of-a-kind opportunity to dine with Walla Walla wine greats Norm McKibben, Jean Francois Pellet and Marty Clubb featuring their top wines from the famed Seven Hills Vineyard (**\$8,000**).

"Many of the great visionaries of wine country were present to support this important event," said Allen Shoup, the event's Co-chair and owner of Long Shadows Vintners. "This was not only a beautiful event, it was a significant achievement for this organization as they continue the important work of bringing national and international awareness and acclaim to this rapidly growing wine region."

With sponsors ranging from The Vineyards and US Bank to Granite Northwest and LeMaster & Daniels, guests were able to see first hand the kind of support that is going into building the economic backbone of Washington's wine country. The new Regional Partnership Fund was well received as guests heard about the programs that would support their communities such as signage development and tourism awareness.

In addition to the altruistic atmosphere the Grand Gala was a lavish evening for some 220 guests at the DeAtley estate who strolled the estate's expansive lawns, visited the wine-tasting tents, sampled hors d'oeuvres and inspected 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: sweet pea soup with Dungeness crab, red chile pipian halibut, Oregon beef tenderloin with gnocchi and gorgonzola cream and a decadent chocolate finale. 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 \$73,000; Event Tickets (Winemaker dinners, Seasons jazz concert) \$27,000; Grand Gala Tickets \$151,500; Raise the paddle \$61,850; Centerpieces \$7,015; Live Auction \$126,220; Silent Auction \$27,745.

Washington Wine Country is a nonprofit organization 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

The Wine Country Celebration produced by Washington Wine Country is the signature event of Washington's vineyard region and the first of its kind to host a series of fundraisers in wineries throughout the wine growing appellations themselves. Over the past five years this popular event continues to evolve, and each year attracts influential business and community leaders from around the state in addition to shining a spotlight on the many hidden treasures of Washington's wine country. www.winecountrycelebration.com

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