

For Immediate Release:
June 23, 2008

Contacts: Bryan Black
Veronica Obregon
(512) 463-7664

**COMMISSIONER STAPLES TRAVELS TO DC TO HELP KICK-OFF
2008 SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE FESTIVAL**

Summer Celebration to Highlight Texas Winemakers and Vineyard Owners

AUSTIN — The 42nd annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival celebrates some of the best of Texas this summer by featuring Texas winemakers and grape growers who will share their stories about the culture, spirit and personality behind the Texas wine industry.

“Texans have a great sense of pride in our state’s wine industry, and this festival provides a wonderful way for us to invite people from all over the world to come to Texas and discover our state’s unique vineyards and wineries,” Commissioner Staples said.

On Tuesday, June 24, Commissioner and Mrs. Staples will join Governor Rick Perry and First Lady Anita Perry for the Celebration of the Lone Star State, a dinner that kicks off the 2008 Smithsonian Folklife Festival. The festival is a cultural heritage exposition that takes place every summer on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

“Texas: A Celebration of Music, Food and Wine” takes place June 25-29 and July 2-6 in the shadow of the Washington Monument and historic Smithsonian Museums. It will feature the Texas Winemaking Tent, sponsored by the Texas Department of Agriculture. In the tent, winemakers and growers from across the state will “talk terroir” and discuss “making wine for Texas tastes,” as well as demonstrate winemaking techniques.

The Texas Winemaking Tent will house four stations representing the winemaking process: the vineyard and harvesting, crushing and fermentation, aging and bottling, and a sensory station. Visitors can informally talk to the winemakers, learn about winemaking equipment, enjoy photographs and even participate in some hands-on opportunities.

“This is a great opportunity to tell people that Texas is more than beer and barbecue, and that we are a significant wine and culinary destination,” Raymond Haak, owner of Haak Winery, said.

Texas wineries selected by the Smithsonian Folklife Festival to participating include: Alamosa Wine Cellars (Bend), Fall Creek Vineyards (Tow), Grape Creek Vineyards (Fredericksburg), Haak Winery (Santa Fe), Kiepersol Estates (Tyler), Lightcatcher Winery (Fort Worth), McPherson Cellars (Lubbock) and Texas Hills Vineyards (Johnson City). Texas master sommelier Guy Stout of Houston joins the wineries, providing his take on Texas’ most promising varietals.

With a state as big as Texas, each region has its own soil and climate, which allows Texas to produce a remarkably diverse assortment of wine. Today, Texas is the fifth-largest wine producer in the United States, with more than 160 licensed wineries in operation and 210 family-owned vineyards covering more than 3,200 acres of land. Visitors from around the country and around the world are discovering Texas' vineyards and participating in wine tastings as part of their trips to the Lone Star State.

For more information on the special event, see the details below or visit the festival's site at www.folklife.si.edu/festival/2008/Texas/index.html.

Texas Talk Stage Discussions

Date	Time	Title	Participants
June 25	12:15 p.m.	Talking Terroir	Raymond and Gladys Haak- Haak Winery, Santa Fe Jason Englert- Grape Creek Vineyards, Fredericksburg
	1:15 p.m.	Making Wine for Texas Tastes	Jim and Karen Johnson- Alamosa Wine Cellars, Bend
June 26	3:15 p.m.	Becoming a Winemaker	Raymond and Gladys Haak- Haak Winery, Santa Fe Jason Englert- Grape Creek Vineyards, Fredericksburg
June 28	3:15 p.m.	Winemaking Tradition and Innovation	Gary and Kathy Gilstrap- Texas Hills Vineyards, Johnson City
June 29	12:15 p.m.	Talking Terroir	Gary and Kathy Gilstrap- Texas Hills Vineyards, Johnson City Jason Englert- Grape Creek Vineyards, Fredericksburg
	3:15 p.m.	Couple-Run Wineries	Gary and Kathy Gilstrap- Texas Hills Vineyards, Johnson City Jim and Karen Johnson- Alamosa Wine Cellars, Bend
July 2	2:15 p.m.	Women in the Wine Industry	Caris Turpen- Lightcatcher Winery, Fort Worth Susan Auler- Fall Creek Vineyards, Tow
July 3	12:15 p.m.	Talking Terroir	Guy Stout- Houston Kim McPherson- McPherson Cellars, Lubbock
	2:15 p.m.	Becoming a Winemaker	Kim McPherson- McPherson Cellars, Lubbock Justin Wiggins- Kiepersol Estates, Tyler
July 4	2:15 p.m.	Making Texas Wine for Texas Tastes	Ed Auler- Fall Creek Vineyards, Tow Caris Turpen- Lightcatcher Winery, Fort Worth Guy Stout- Houston
July 5	12:15 p.m.	From Soil to Sommelier	Guy Stout- Houston
	3:15 p.m.	Winemaking Tradition and Innovation	Kim McPherson- McPherson Cellars, Lubbock Caris Turpen- Lightcatcher Winery, Fort Worth
July 6	2:15 p.m.	Talking Terroir	Guy Stout- Houston Justin Wiggins- Kiepersol Estates, Tyler

###