



## **Loudoun's Craft Beverage Industry Contributes More than \$48.6 Million to Loudoun's Economy**

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LEESBURG (October 1, 2024) – Loudoun's craft beverage industry, which has grown exponentially over the last decade, is contributing millions to the local economy, according to a recent study.

In 2023, Loudoun's wineries, limited breweries, distilleries, meaderies and cideries reported more than an estimated \$48.6 million in revenue, an increase of almost 60 percent since 2018, according to an Economic Impact Study conducted by Qualtrics and Aquino Consulting. The study, commissioned by Visit Loudoun, Loudoun Economic Development, the Loudoun Wineries and Winegrowers Association and the Loudoun Craft Brewers Association, shows the impact these growing industries have not only on Loudoun's visitor economy but also for local residents.

"It is evident by this research that Loudoun's craft beverage industry is a vital piece of Loudoun's economy and is enjoyed not only by Loudoun residents but is a key attractor for visitors," Visit Loudoun President and CEO Beth Erickson said. "What we know is that our wineries are the number one visitor attraction and when people explore the 50 wineries in DC's Wine Country®, it creates an economic impact ripple effect for our towns, shops, historic sites, restaurants and other attractions."

In 2023, Loudoun wineries, limited breweries and distilleries welcomed an estimated 1 million visitors. For wineries, nearly 50 percent of their wine club membership is local while an additional 27 percent live in Virginia. Eighty to 85 percent of survey respondents have private event space for weddings and corporate meetings while 65 to 80 percent do ticketed events including concerts, festivals and dinners.

Not only do these businesses provide experiences for residents and visitors but also provide employment opportunities. More than 85 percent of employees who work in the craft beverage industry are Loudoun residents. In 2023 wineries and limited breweries also contributed more than \$1 million in donations to the community.

"Loudoun County's rural craft beverage industry remains a significant force in driving employment and economic diversification. By supporting local, artisanal products, visitors contribute to Loudoun's agricultural economy, benefiting everyone involved," said Buddy Rizer, Executive Director of the Loudoun Department of Economic Development.

Wineries and limited breweries make up a significant piece of the agritourism economy. Loudoun's wine region celebrates 40 years in 2024. About 56 percent of Loudoun wineries and independent growers responded to the survey. Those respondents keep 704 acres of land under vine and approximately 3,000 acres in agricultural use. The most popular varietals grown include Chardonnay and Viognier for white and Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot for Red.

“I have been a part of Loudoun’s amazing winery community for 12 years and I couldn’t be more excited about how much our industry of locally owned, small farm wineries has grown,” said Aimee Henkle, owner of Lost Creek Winery and member of the Loudoun Wineries and Winegrowers Association board. “This study demonstrates the economic impact our industry can make when we work together and lift each other up. At our heart we are stewards of the land, farming and crafting wines with the utmost quality. We wouldn’t be here if it was not for the support and enthusiasm of all the visitors who come to share in our unique winery experiences. To see that impact has nearly doubled in the last five years is exciting.”