



NEWS RELEASE

WYOMING DISTRICT OFFICE

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Contact: Sharon Nichols (307) 261-6508
Internet Address: <http://www.sba.gov/wy>

Patrick Zimmerer Named Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2006

Huntley – The Wyoming District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) has named Patrick Zimmerer, owner/operator of Table Mountain Vineyards, LLC, the Young Entrepreneur of the Year 2006. This award will be presented to him on Wednesday, May 10, 2006, at the Cottonwood Country Club in Torrington and will start at 11:30am – 1:00pm. Steve Despain, District Director, will be presenting Mr. Zimmerer with this award. First Lady Freudenthal will be in attendance and is receiving an award during this time.

This award is given to an individual who serves as a majority owner and operates or bears principal responsibility for operating a small business with a three year track record and who will not have reached the age of 30 by June 1, 2006. Criteria used to evaluate the nominees for this category is evidence of success as measured by sales and profits; increased employment opportunities; development and or utilization of innovative or creative business methods and demonstrated entrepreneurial potential necessary for long-term business success and economic growth.

The President of the United States recognizes contributions of the small business community to the American economy and society by proclamation each year.

Patrick Zimmerer was raised on his family farm near Huntley, WY. His family farm raised cattle, corn, hay and sugar beets. As he grew up, he realized that opportunities for him to remain on the family farm were limited. He attended the University of Wyoming receiving double majors in Agricultural Business and Agricultural Communications. After completing a thesis on “The Feasibility of Growing Grapes in Eastern/Wyoming and Western Nebraska”, he convinced his family to let him establish a vineyard plot on their family farm. In May 2001, Zimmerer planted 300 grape vines covering ½ acre. In 2002 Zimmerer planted 2,000 additional vines covering 2 acres of vineyards. Since 2003 the industry has taken root. Zimmerer’s vineyard has currently expanded to nearly 8,000 vines. In 2004 the winery was established and had nowhere to go but up.

While attending law school at the University of Wyoming, Zimmerer entered in a competition with his business plan to create a winery. He was one of the finalists, but the judges had already expressed concerns over the plan. Zimmerer sought out the assistance of the SBA office in Laramie, WY. He said “The SBA was able to help me get my marketing plan on the right track. It was great to get an outside voice to point out the strengths and weaknesses of my marketing plan.” Zimmerer won the competition with his business plan. Using the money he received from the competition, he established his winery on the family’s farm. In 2004 Zimmerer received his law degree, then in 2005 he introduced legislation to allow his winery the ability to sell and distribute his own products. The bill is still being developed due to a recent U.S. Supreme Court decision about wineries. The bill is aimed to go into effect in March 2006.

Zimmerer handles his product from “vine to wine” which makes his venture nearly completely vertically integrated. His goals haven’t changed, while the winery can import grapes and juice from other states, the winery remains committed to using 100% Wyoming grown products and creating a market for alternative agricultural products.

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For more information about SBA’s programs for small businesses, call 307-261-6500 or TDY 307-261-6527 or visit the SBA’s extensive Web site at www.sba.gov/wy.

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