



GROWER MARKETING COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
May 28, 2025

The Grower Marketing Committee of the Lodi Winegrape Commission met at 12:00pm on Wednesday, May 28, at the Lodi Winegrape Commission office, 2545 W. Turner Rd., Lodi, CA.

The meeting was called to order at 12:15pm.

Roll was called. Roll was called. Committee members Joan Kautz, Jaclyn Stokes, Curt Gillespie, Ben Kolber, Mitch Spaletta, and Aaron Shinn were in attendance, along with guests Mohrgan Fry (Mohr-Fry Ranches), two guests (unnamed) from the Madera winegrowing area, and staff members Stuart Spencer, Allison Champion, and Jenny Heitman.

A quorum was established.

Minutes from the April 1, 2025, meeting were approved. Stokes / Kolber – carried.

Public Comment on Items Appearing on the Agenda

No public comments on items appearing on the agenda were made.

Marketing & Advertising

Staff provided an overview of ongoing and future marketing activities.

Paid Advertising – Staff presented the committee with two concepts for future marketing campaigns:

- **“No Reservations” Content Marketing Campaign** – The campaign is designed to highlight Lodi’s authentic, spontaneous, and welcoming spirit by celebrating its open-door, no-appointment-needed approach to wine tasting. Emphasizing inclusivity and approachability, the campaign positions Lodi in contrast to more exclusive wine regions. The goal is to launch the campaign by fall 2025, utilizing primarily organic channels including social media, email newsletters, photography, video content, and storytelling from local wineries and guests. Input from wineries is being collected to ensure the campaign reflects the full diversity and character of the region.
- **“We are Lodi Wine” Campaign** – The campaign aims to spotlight the people behind Lodi’s wine industry—farmworkers, cellar teams, hospitality staff, and others whose everyday contributions shape the region’s identity. Inspired by the



idea that “it takes a village,” the campaign will celebrate Lodi’s diversity and deep sense of community, with a focus on inclusivity and shared purpose. No official or estimated launch date has been identified.

Export Marketing –

- **Majestic Wine Group Lodi Tour (July 7, 2025)** – We are hosting a group of 18 store managers and buyers from Majestic Wine Group for a regional overview. Majestic is the UK’s largest independent alcohol retailer.
- **European Sommeliers Lodi Tour (July 7 & 8, 2025)** – We are hosting a group of sommeliers from across Europe for a regional overview and winery visits. The group is being brought in by Wine Institute.
- **OIV MSc Wine Management Lodi Tour (July 22, 2025)** – Nine students from OIV Master of Science Wine Management program will be visiting Lodi in July. The Commission will host the group to provide a regional overview and assist in organizing several winery visits.

Public Relations

Staff provided an overview of ongoing and future public relations activities.

Field Blends Lodi Tour (June 2-6, 2025) – Maryam Ahmed with Maryam + Company will host a Field Blends educational wine tour in Lodi for wine professionals in June. Field Blends tours aim to bring greater visibility to the destination region. We are sponsoring the tour and hosting the Welcome Reception and Dinner on June 2.

Tina Martinez, Good Housekeeping, Lodi Visit (July 14-17, 2025) – Tina Martinez will be visiting Lodi in July. Tina will be evaluating Lodi for Good Housekeeping’s Travel Awards. The visit is a direct result of joint outreach between the Commission and Visit Lodi.

The Old Vine Conference, Lodi tour (November 3-4, 2025) – The 7th edition of the conference is scheduled October 31-November 4, and will coincide with the culmination of California Wines’ Global Buyers Marketplace. The conference will begin in Napa and will conclude with seminars and vineyard visits in Lodi on November 3 and 4. An international audience of trade and media is expected to attend the conference.

Grower Outreach & Education

Grape Market Challenges Blogs (LodiGrowers.com) & Ongoing Outreach – Stuart Spencer continues to publish educational articles on the current grape market, specifically federal policies and regulations that are compounding its downturn. A fifth article, “Why Many California Winegrowers Are Calling For Tariffs On Imports,” was published May 12. We are working with Calhoun & Company to pitch this article as an op-ed to various publications, including *Los Angeles Times*.

FY 2024-25 Budget Review

The committee reviewed a revised budget through April 2025 (Exhibit B).



FY 2025-26 Budget Request

A proposed budget for fiscal year 2025-26 was reviewed (Exhibit C). A motion was made to accept the recommended budget with projected expenses of \$252,350.00 for the fiscal year 2025-26. Kolber / Shinn – motion carried.

Reports from Other Committees

Winery Marketing Committee

Winery BID – The BID assessment has been adjusted to 1.5%. Michael David Winery has agreed to support the petition, establishing the 50% majority in favor needed to begin scheduling county hearings. Two public hearings must be held before the district is officially formed. We estimate that assessment collections will start in November 2025.

Dress Up Wine Down – Sacramento (May 17, 2025) – Twenty wineries participated in this event in downtown Sacramento. The event is a partnership between the Commission, The Handle District, and Sacramento Fashion Week. Proceeds benefit WEAVE – a local organization which provides services to victims of domestic and sexual abuse. Approximately 600 guests attended this year's event compared to 460 in 2024.

Public Comment on Items Not Appearing on the Agenda

No public comments on items not appearing on the agenda were made.

Set Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Grower Marketing Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, July 30, at 12:00pm.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 2:30pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Joan Kautz, Committee Chair

Questions or requests for further information should be directed to Joan Kautz (209-712-3300) or Stuart Spencer (209-367-4727).