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COOPER VINEYARDS ANTICIPATES LEED PLATINUM CERTIFICATION

Richmond, VA – January 4, 2011 – Cooper Vineyards, located in Louisa, VA is in the process of becoming LEED platinum certified, making them the first winery in that category on the East Coast and the second in the country. LEED, which stands for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, validates the construction of a green building and is broken into a four-tier award classification system ranging from Certified to Platinum, the highest level of certification.

Some features of the new tasting room at Cooper Vineyards that adhere to the LEED Platinum qualifications include using rainwater collection and low flow fixtures to reduce water usage by 40%, structurally insulated panels for the roof and walls, geothermal heating and cooling system for the building, Low voltage LED lighting coupled with daylight and occupancy sensors, solar panels which provide over 15% of energy needs for the building, and the use of many recycled and locally sourced materials for the construction. Baskervill and lead architect Michael Pellis, AIA, LEED AP, along with Haley Builders and CitySpace Solar, were instrumental in ensuring the process met LEED standards.

Cooper Vineyards is planning on opening the new tasting room in late January or February, with a Grand Opening scheduled for April 8th to celebrate the completion of their new tasting room.

The process of building a LEED platinum certified building was initially more expensive and arduous than co-owners, Jacque Hogge, MD and Geoffrey Cooper, MD expected, but they were able to get financial assistance from the United States Department of Agriculture. “Know that there are grants available to help with the costs of sustainable building projects,” Hogge advises to other potential green wineries. Cooper Vineyards received 2 of the 3 USDA grants awarded in Virginia in 2010 to help with the expenses of their construction.

Dr. Bruce Zoecklein, Professor Emeritus, former Head, Enology-Grape Chemistry Group for Virginia Tech, is a great resource for wineries interested in learning more about sustainability as he is certified by the Wine Institute as a sustainability auditor for the wine industry.

“Sustainability has not gotten as much attention in our part of the world as it should,” states Zoecklein. He works with new and existing wineries to create a sustainable business design and appraise their current sustainability practices. Some of the practices Zoecklein recommends to wineries looking to become more sustainable include building orientation, insulation, energy capture, and water recycling. In order to make this extensive information more accessible, Zoecklein has produced a Winery Planning and Design CD which can be ordered at www.vtwines.info.

Two other wineries in Virginia are in the process of obtaining their LEED certification: Sunset Hills Vineyard and North Gate Vineyards, both located in Purcellville, Virginia, are awaiting their finalized certification. Sunset Hills Vineyard recently renovated their 140 year old winery and became 100% solar powered in order to be more energy efficient. North Gate Vineyards is planning to receive at least LEED Silver Certification for their new tasting room that includes a large solar panel array that will make for net zero electric consumption over the year, as well as use of many recycled and local materials. Their new tasting bar counter top, for example, is made from the glass of their own recycled wine bottles. “Everyone should try to be at least LEED certified, even existing wineries,” Mark Fedor of North Gate Vineyards comments. “Now that we have been involved in this process, we hope to be role models and help educate the industry.”

For more information on Cooper Vineyards, visit www.coopervineyards.com. For more information on LEED certification, visit www.usgbc.org/LEED/.

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