

## Wine Business Workshop

### Presenter Biographies

**Justin Furr** is the Executive Director of the North Carolina Wine & Grape Council. The Council facilitates development of the North Carolina grape and wine industry by enhancing product quality for consumers and encouraging economic viability and opportunity for growers and processors through education, marketing, and research. It includes an 11-member board to the Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development in the N.C. Department of Commerce located in downtown Raleigh. State legislation established the North Carolina Wine & Grape Council in 1986 to serve and grow the state's wine and grape industry. Activities of the Council include marketing and promotional campaigns, public relations and outreach, [visitncwine.com](http://visitncwine.com), assisting grape growers and wineries, and research and extension projects. There are currently 106 wineries and more than 400 vineyards across the state from the mountains to the coast. Furr went to Wake Forest University and graduated from the University of Wisconsin in Journalism. Previously, he spent five years in sports and entertainment marketing before joining the North Carolina Wine & Grape Council. Furr was formerly the Council's marketing specialist before becoming executive director in 2010.

**Briles Johnson** is Manager of Business Link North Carolina or 'BLNC' with the NC Department of Commerce. She has over 10 years experience working in economic and business development for the State of North Carolina as well as running small businesses in the private industry. Briles helped launch the BLNC program in 2009 and has formed invaluable working relationships with the BLNC Partners, the economic development community and businesses across the state. She also helped launch BizBoost, a program of outreach and support services targeted to small and midsize companies. Through partnership with the SBTDC, BizBoost has assisted hundreds of NC businesses, retained and increased jobs as well as successfully marketed the business services of the state. In her roles at NC Commerce, Briles has assisted thousands of NC companies start, grow and maintain their businesses. Briles is a member of the North Carolina Economic Developers Association, member of the Small Business Advisory Committee with the Department of Vocation Rehabilitation, member of the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Alliance. She is a participant in the SBTDC LEAD (Leadership Enhancement and Development) Program, Governor's Entrepreneurship Summit 2011 Planning Committee, moderator and participant at the NC Nanotechnology Commercialization Conference, speaker NC Business Incubators Association Fall Conference and many regional small business summits. Briles has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Spanish from Meredith College and Spanish for Foreign Student Certification from Nebrija University in Madrid, Spain. Contact information; Business Link North Carolina, NC Department of Commerce, 301 N. Wilmington Street, Raleigh, NC, 27601; (919)807-4285; [bjohnson@nccommerce.com](mailto:bjohnson@nccommerce.com).

Economist **Dr. Gerald White** is a professor emeritus at Cornell and is recognized as one of the most respected wine economist in the country. Dr. White has over 40 years experience in agricultural extension and education, and has conducted financial analysis of wine producing regions across the US. With a primary departmental program area in Agricultural Finance and Management, Dr. White's expertise includes farm business management, production economics, horticultural management and marketing.

*"My program is aimed at helping owners and managers of horticultural firms to improve their management skills in today's competitive economic environment. My extension program is supported by applied research devoted to the economics of horticultural crops. Extension programs emphasize economic analyses of orchard, vineyard, and greenhouse production systems. Risk Management for specialty crop producers has been an important program area in recent years. Economic outlook for the tree fruit, grape and wine sectors is conducted annually and communicated to growers through trade and extension publications and at the Annual Cornell Agribusiness Economic Outlook Conference. "*

Current projects include the Cost of establishment and Production of Vinifera Grapes in the Finger Lakes Region of New York; financial analysis of investing in a vineyard and/or a winery; costs of establishing and producing Minnesota Cold Hardy Grape Varieties; and developing marketing plans for wineries. Seminars on these topics have been presented to growers in New York, Michigan, North Carolina/Virginia, and Vermont in the last two years.

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