

Sierra foothill wineries unite to have louder voice

By Chris Macias, Sacramento Bee

There's a new wine association brewing in them thar hills. Make that the Sierra Foothills Wine Alliance, an association that covers approximately 800 square miles of wine country ranging from the counties of Calaveras to El Dorado and Amador.

All of these areas already have respective associations to promote wine tourism and all throw events to draw the wine-drinking masses. But the competition around California's wine areas can be tough, so in a tough economy, banding together might be the best strategy for the Sierra foothills.

"The producers here in our neck of the woods are mostly family-owned and -operated," said Beth Jones of El Dorado County's Lava Cap Winery and president of the El Dorado Winery Association.

"It's difficult to get a foothold in the market against the larger corporate entities and fight for shelf space. The understanding is that we have lots of small voices that need to band together and be heard."

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