

**News Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Michigan's First Ever Winemaker Apprentices Graduate in Benzie County**

BEULAH, MI—Michigan's first ever winemaker apprentices were recognized at a special graduation ceremony June 15 at St. Ambrose Cellars in Benzie County. Scott Cramton and Nathan Ely completed a registered apprenticeship program and earned a nationally recognized credential indicating their proficiency in the winemaking industry. Cramton and Ely spent two years in work-based learning and technical education related to winemaking. St. Ambrose Cellars worked with Northwest Michigan Works! to establish the registered apprenticeship program for winemakers.

"There's a shortage of winemakers around here," said Kirk Jones, President and CEO of St. Ambrose Cellars and Sleeping Bear Farms. "We needed to bring somebody in that we could custom train. This was an opportunity to really focus in on what we needed to do."

"The program was very good," said Crampton. "I'm really thankful to be where I am today through the help of this program and being able to learn on the job."

The ceremony included certificates of recognition for the graduates from Congressman Jack Bergman, which were presented by his Director of Michigan Operations, Melanie Collingsworth. State Senator Darwin Booher and Representative Curt VanderWall presented tributes to Cramton, Ely, and St. Ambrose Cellars. Representatives from the Michigan Workforce Development Agency and Michigan State University's Institute of Agriculture Technology also spoke at the event.

St. Ambrose Cellars and Sleeping Bear Farms are continuing to work with Northwest Michigan Works! on registered apprenticeship programs for other employees.

Registered apprenticeships are offered through the U.S. Department of Labor and are a proven training method for employers to build a talent pipeline of highly skilled, educated employees.

(MORE)

Northwest Michigan Works! provides technical assistance and administrative support for registered apprenticeships, including development and implementation guidance. For more information about registered apprenticeships, contact Evelyn Szpliet at [evelyn.szpliet@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:evelyn.szpliet@networksnorthwest.org) or 231.723.2535, ext. 152.

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NOTE to Media: Images are oftentimes available upon request by e-mailing Dan Boss at [dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org](mailto:dan.boss@networksnorthwest.org) and stating preferences for resolution (300 dpi?), file format (.tif? .jpg?) and file size (1MB or less?). Or, phone (231) 929-5047. Check our online Media Room at: [networksnorthwest.org/media](http://networksnorthwest.org/media)

Founded in 1974, Networks Northwest facilitates and manages various programs and services for the 10 county region. These programs include Northwest Michigan Works, Small Business Development Center, Procurement Technical Assistance Center, various business services, and many different regional planning initiatives in response to our communities' requests and needs. You will see the broad spectrum of workforce, business and community services Networks Northwest offers if you visit our web site, [networksnorthwest.org](http://networksnorthwest.org)

Networks Northwest's member counties are: Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Manistee, Missaukee, and Wexford.