

SHAWNEE COMMUNITY COLLEGE



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Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau
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April 26, 2005

Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau
P.O. Box 14412
Washington, DC 20044-4412

Attn: Chief, Regulations and Procedures Division

On behalf of Shawnee Community College and Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau, I am writing in support of the proposed establishment of the Shawnee Hills viticultural area in southernmost Illinois.

Much of the acreage in the proposed viticultural area lies within the southernmost region of Illinois. Currently, the wineries in the Shawnee Hills area serve as the anchor for agritourism development in southernmost Illinois.

The proposed designation will be a tremendous marketing tool for the grape growers, vintners and the tourism industry in southern Illinois. The designation will allow wineries to bottle wine with a mark of distinction and prestige that will only elevate the high-quality products and experience that thousands of tourists already enjoy. The benefits will be shared with growers as the new designation secures future demand for current fruits and additional new vines.

While wine drinkers have not typically looked to Illinois for wine, excellent wines have been emerging from the region in recent years. Knowledgeable people and creative leaders in the southern Illinois grape and wine industry have worked tirelessly to study the proposed appellation and follow the application process. We support those efforts.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephanie Rhodes", written over a light gray background.

Stephanie Rhodes

Stephanie Rhodes

Agritourism Development Coordinator

Shawnee Community College/Southernmost Illinois Tourism Bureau

Partners in AgriTourism Development