



Viticultural Areas

Approval of River Junction

By Tim Devanney (202) 927-8210

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) is establishing an American viticultural area, to be known as "River Junction." The area is located in southern San Joaquin County, California, at the confluence of the Stanislaus and San Joaquin Rivers. The area consists of approximately 1,300 contiguous acres, of which 740 are currently planted to vineyards. ATF has determined that the area is conspicuous for grape growing, and that the area's geographic features (including climate, soil composition, topography and other physical characteristics) distinguish the region from surrounding areas.

The effective date of the establishment of the River Junction viticultural area is July 8, 2001. □

Diamond Mountain District Established

By Jennifer Berry (716) 551-4048

On June 1, 2001, ATF published in the Federal Register a Treasury Decision establishing the Diamond Mountain District viticultural area. Diamond Mountain District is located within Napa County, California, and is entirely within the existing Napa Valley viticultural area. This viticultural area is the result of a petition filed by Rudy von Strasser of Von Strasser Winery on behalf of the Diamond Mountain Appellation Committee, representing 15 growers and vintners in the area. Diamond Mountain District encompasses approximately 5,000 acres, of which approximately 450 acres are planted to vineyards. The final rule will become effective on July 31, 2001. □

ATF Exploring Electronic Filing of Certificates of Label Approval

By Tom Stewart (202) 927-8200

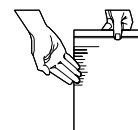


In order to comply with the provisions of the Government Paperwork Elimination Act (GPEA), ATF is currently exploring options as to how we can accommodate the electronic submission and approval of Certificates of Label Approval (COLAs). The GPEA calls for Government agencies to provide for the option of filing documents electronically rather than with paper. We are talking to several vendors who are experienced in creating electronic solutions for Government agencies. Our plan is to develop a system that would allow permittees to submit an electronic version of the COLA, track it through our internal processing and return the approved form, or a disapproved one with the reasons for rejection attached. Our planned system would also have the ability for permittees to see all of their approved, rejected or in-process COLAs. Approved COLAs would be available to any person with access to the Internet. Some additional features we are exploring include notification of state agencies and/or U.S. Customs and the ability to be notified when COLAs for certain types of products, such as flavored vodkas, are approved.

The advantages of E-filed COLAs include less time involved in getting COLAs to and from ATF, immediate notification of status, and elimination of rejection for reasons such as failure to include required information (signatures, class and type, etc.) or submitting incorrect information. We have advised all interested companies that any system developed must provide for the security of COLA information being transmitted to ATF and protection of unapproved, rejected or in-process COLAs in our system.

At this time we are not sure how long it would take to construct such a system, however indications from the vendors are that it would be less than 12 months. ATF and interested vendors will be in contact with industry trade associations within the next few months to discuss possible solutions for E-filing COLAs and solicit volunteers to pilot such a system. □

Offer-in-Compromise



By Jeanette Compton (202) 927-8130

On April 12, 2001, the Director, Industry Operations, Boston Field Division, accepted an offer-in-compromise in the amount of \$1,000 from Grand View Winery Ltd. Co., East Calais, Vermont. Grand View Winery Ltd.Co. introduced wine products into intrastate commerce without first obtaining exemptions from required certificate of label approvals. □

Reorganization of Title 27 of the Code of Federal Regulations



By Lisa Gesser (202) 927-8210

The regulations previously located in 27 CFR part 296 - Miscellaneous Regulations Relating to Tobacco Products and Cigarette Papers and Tubes, are now recodified as 27 CFR part 46. The effective date for this recodification was June 14, 2001. This is the first of several parts that will be recodified in the near future. The several remaining parts will be renumbered as follows:

Subchapter A - Alcohol

Part 170 will be recodified as Part 29
 Part 194 will be recodified as Part 31
 Part 250 will be recodified as Part 26
 Part 251 will be recodified as Part 27
 Part 252 will be recodified as Part 28

Subchapter B - Tobacco

Part 270 will be recodified as Part 40
 Part 275 will be recodified as Part 41
 Part 290 will be recodified as Part 44
 Part 295 will be recodified as Part 45

Subchapter C - Firearms & Explosives

Part 47 will be recodified as Part 52
 Part 178 will be recodified as Part 50
 Part 179 will be recodified as Part 51

Subchapter D - Procedures and Practices

Part 200 will be recodified as Part 71

This project will complete the final recodification from the IRS numbering system to the ATF numbering system. This process will improve the organization of title 27 CFR. □

NRC Provides Timely Service

By Yolanda Whitehead (513) 684-6978



The consolidation of ATF's five Technical Services offices into one National Revenue Center (NRC) is finally complete. Despite concerns that customer service would suffer as a result of the consolidation, The NRC in Cincinnati, OH, continues to provide excellent service.

One of the primary services provided by employees of the NRC is processing applications for alcohol and tobacco permits. We pride ourselves on promoting public safety and fair practice by thoroughly reviewing permit applications and taking appropriate action in a timely manner.

Many applicants have already invested a large amount of time and money in their business ventures when they apply for an ATF permit. We try to minimize the length of time that legitimate businesses must wait before we authorize them to commence operations. Sometimes the applicant's expectation of the amount of time we need to process an application does not match the actual time it takes to process the application.

The average number of days that it takes for us to process an application, from the time we receive the application to the time we either issue the permit or notify the applicant that a permit will not be issued, is very reasonable. The length of time our office takes to process an application may depend on a number of factors including, the number of applications received, the complexity of the application, the number of errors on the application, and the applicant's availability.

We work very hard to process every application as quickly as possible. If an applicant is concerned with the impact that the application process has on their financial standing or scheduled business startup date, the applicant may contact the Specialist handling the application in our office and request the status of the application. An applicant may choose to speak with the Unit Supervisor if the Specialist is unable to provide a satisfactory solution.

A recent study revealed that the average amount of time we took to process an application from start to finish during 2000 was approximately 82 days. This includes the amount of time that the applications were out of our office for inspection. We also discovered that the median number of days we took to process an application from start to finish during 2000 was approximately 64 days. This number also includes the amount of time that the applications were out of our office for inspection.

This means that although some applications will be processed in less time and others may experience a greater delay, the average applicant can expect us to take final action on an application within 2-3 months, regardless of the complexity of the application and the time allowed for inspections. □



New phone and fax numbers for the Office of Alcohol and Tobacco employees in San Francisco, CA.

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