Local wineries place in the Governor's Cup

Two land spots in the case

BY GRACIE HART BROOKS
Editor

Numerous local wines are among those receiving medals in this year's Governor's Cup competition with two receiving spots in the coveted Governor's Cup Case.

Held annually by the Virginia Wineries Association in partnership with the Virginia Wine Board and the Virginia Vineyards Association, the Governor's Cup pits wines from across the state against each other, with judges sampling each to find the best. This year, judges sampled 670 wines, ciders and meads with each being tasted by six judges over the course of three days. Judges only know the grape or category of wine, not the vintage, winery or name. Individual judges' scores are averaged into one score with the lowest score eliminated. The highest ranking wines then advance to the three-day, 12 judge final round. Each judge samples each wine, with a final average score determined after the lowest score is dropped. The 12 red and white wines with the highest average are identified as the Governor's Cup Case with the highest ranking wine named the Governor's Cup winner. Ciders are judged in their own category with the top six identified. Those six are then re-tasted and ranked with the highest ranked earning the Best in Show Cider award.

Wines are given scores from 100 with gold winners receiving an average score of 90-100 points, silver 85-89 points and bronze 80-84 points.

The Governor's Cup Case and overall Governor's Cup winners are identified at a gala held at The Main Street Station in Richmond.

Valley Road Vineyards received the top prize, winning the Governor's Cup with its 2023 Cabernet Franc Reserve. Orange County wineries Barboursville Vineyards and Woodbrook Farm Vineyard placed in the Governor's Cup Case with their 2024 Vermentino and 2024 Petit Manseg, respectively. The Barn at 678, also located in Barboursville, received a Best in Show for its 2024 Viognier.

Barboursville Vineyards received gold medals for its 2019 Octagon; 2020 Octagon and 2024 Vermentino. The Barn at 678 received gold for its 2021 Reserve Red, 2023 Estate Merlot and 2024 Viognier. Woodbrook Farm Vineyard received gold for its 2023 Overnight Hero Estate Reserve Red, 2024 Petit Manseng and 2024 Pinot Gris. Etlan-based DuCard Vineyards received gold for its 2023 Cabernet Franc, 2023 Cabernet Franc Vintners Reserve and 2023 Triskele. Madison's Early Mountain Vineyards received gold for its 2021 Eluvium and 2022 Novum; Prince Michel Vineyard and Winery for its 2024 Petit Manseng and Revalation Vineyards for its 2023 Cabernet Franc.

The Barn at 678 also received three silver medals; Barboursville Vineyards three; Blue Quartz four; DuCard three; Early Mountain two; Prince Michel two; Revalation Vineyards two and Reynard Florence five. Prince Michel received one bronze medal.

GOVERNORS CUP
The Governor's Cup Case features the top 12 wines and best in show cider.

Soaring gas prices compounded by electricity rates

Electricity rates increased significantly in 2025

BY ASHLEY MURRAY
Virginia Mercury

Electricity rates "increased significantly" in nearly every U.S. state in 2025, with residents in a dozen states seeing at least a 10% jump, according to a congressional report released by Democrats Tuesday.

Minority members of the Joint Economic Committee released state-by-state figures from monthly utility bill data showing, on average, American households paid roughly $110, or 6.4%, more for electricity in 2025, compared to 2024.

The analysis came amid other gloomy economic headlines, including a steep increase in gasoline prices since the U.S.-Israeli war in Iran began, and a lousy jobs report last month.

States that saw the highest spikes included New Jersey, 16.9%; Indiana, 16.3%; Illinois, 15.9%; Pennsylvania, 12.1%; Kentucky, 11.8%; Maryland, 11.6%; Tennessee, 11.6%; New York, 11.4%; Ohio, 11.1%; Missouri, 11%; Maine, 10.6%; and Washington state, 10.3%. Virginia rates increased by 9.5%.

The District of Columbia topped the list with an increase of 23.5%, according to the two-page report.

Rates dropped by 18% in Nevada, 3.1% in California, 2.4% in Hawaii and 1.6 % in Arizona.

Campaign pledge

Democrats on the committee pointed to President Donald Trump's campaign promise to slash electricity costs, among other prices, by half.

Affordability is a key issue ahead of the 2026 midterm elections in November that will determine control of Congress. Trump has repeatedly referred to the issue of affordability as a "hoax."

"American families don't need a report to tell them that the President has broken his campaign promise to slash energy costs; they already feel the impact of President Trump's actions every single day. But this report is yet another indication that sky-high costs are continuing to rise — and are continuing to hurt American families," the committee's ranking member, Sen. Maggie Hassan, D-N.H., said in a statement.

The committee pulled the electric-

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sending in a nomination is a wonderful way to recognize those heroes," notes Ellen Phipps, Executive Director of Aging Together.

Phipps emphasizes the importance of honoring older adults who dedicate themselves to supporting others, while also challenging and dispelling inaccurate stereotypes associated with aging. By nominating someone, citizens from each county in the region can play a vital role in this effort. Public nominations are essential for Aging Together to properly celebrate those who truly deserve recognition for their meaningful contributions.

Aging Together is asking the public to submit nominations for 5 Over 65 and send them in by March 27, 2026.

The general criterion for consideration requires that the person:

- Is age 65 or older
- Lives or works in one of the five counties of our region (Culpeper, Fauquier, Madison, Orange or Rappahannock) - One person per county will be chosen (or one couple)

Other ways potential nominees you know may contribute positively to their community include:

- They have job or career experience that is passed on through mentorship and leadership in the workplace
- They provide hours of support to organizations through volunteerism
- They have spearheaded programs or projects that have changed their community for the better
- They contribute in a variety of meaningful ways within their community.

Full criteria and nomination forms are available on the agency's website: www.agingtogether.org / or email info@agingtogegther.org for one to be mailed. All nominations must be submitted by March 27, 2026 to be considered.

Aging Together will be honoring the five chosen individuals at their annual 5 Over 65 Celebration and Annual Meeting on August 27, 2026 at Fauquier Springs Country Club.

The 2025 recipients were: Culpeper – Sharon Welch Clark; Fauquier – Karen White; Madison – Carlyle Weaver; Orange – Mary Jane Atwater; Rappahannock – Barbara and Matthew Black.