



## KETK 56 NEWS

### Smith County's first winery opens Wednesday

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On Wednesday, Smith County's first winery will open its doors to the public.

K.E. Cellars, a division of Kiepersol Estates in Bullard, is opening in Tyler's French Quarter on Broadway and the Loop.

Pierre de Wett is the owner of the new winery. He says it doesn't matter if you're a wine connoisseur or a novice, K.E. Cellars has something for everyone, including learning how grapes go from the vine into the wine.

"They'll be able to watch the whole process. The process is sporadic. So you have crushing time, bottling time. But they'll be able to watch the whole process," he said.

So how is it legal to open a winery in a dry county?

The TABC tells us the wine must be bottled in the state, and 75 percent of the grapes must be grown in Texas. This allows them to not only sell wine, but to also dispense free wine for consumption on premises for wine tastings.

But the thought of a winery opening in East Texas has some talking about what could be next.

"I think having the county dry takes away a lot of the bad things in the community that may go on, so I think it's better to keep it a dry community."

"I think it's fine because they're going to buy it anyway, so they may as well get the revenue for the tax for it here in Tyler."

With other East Texas counties making the switch from wet to dry, many wonder if this latest venture means Smith County could be next.

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