After work beer a disappearing tradition in U.S.

By Brendan O'Brien, Reuters

A tattooed man with a goatee shakes five dice in a black cup, slams it down on the bar and watches as they come to rest among half-full beer bottles and empty shot glasses.

"Nothin," he says in disgust as he quickly slaps down a $20 bill to buy another round of drinks, in a U.S. ritual of beer drinking after work that is undergoing a gradual decline.

"I used to get the third-shift Allen Bradley guys in the morning, but they have cut and cut jobs," said Terry Zadra, owner of the 177-year-old Zad's Roadhouse on the south side of Milwaukee.

The bar is just blocks from an industrial plant owned by Rockwell Automation, which bought Allen Bradley, a factory equipment company, in 1985.

One result of the 2008-09 recession that reduced manufacturing jobs in places such as Milwaukee has been slower traffic at some bars, and sluggish beer sales nationwide over the past four years, according to industry analysts.

"Contrary to the myth that people go out and drown their sorrows, the truth is that beer drinkers are pretty responsible people and when they have to cut back, they're cutting back on their pleasures," said Chris Thorne, vice president of communications at the Beer Institute, a Washington-based trade group.

According to the institute, beer drinkers last year in the United States drank 203.4 million barrels, about 5 percent

less than in 2008.

More concern about healthy living, stiffer drunk-driving laws and measures that ban smoking in places such as taverns have hit beer sales during the last couple of decades in Milwaukee and throughout the country.

“There has been a definite shift from the on-premise to the off-premise consumption,” said Pete Madland, executive director of the Tavern League of Wisconsin. “The smoker, for instance, is going to the liquor store, buying a 12-pack of beer and going home.”

Over the past few decades, it has become much less acceptable in the business community to have a drink during lunch or tip a few after work with colleagues.

“Society looks at that person that has a glass of beer with his burger like he has a drinking problem,” Madland said.

A glimmer of hope for the industry is the high-end craft beer segment, which has seen sales increase by 14 percent during the first half of 2012 compared with the same period last year, according to the Beer Institute.

These regional and local brews are more expensive and tend to be more recession-proof than mass-consumption brands like Miller Lite and Bud Light.

“Those occupations that weathered the storm of the Great Recession and then a very weak recovery … they were always able to afford a high-end beer,” Thorne said. “We would still like to see that American pilsner part of the brewing market get back its share.”

Despite the cultural and economic pressures, beer remains synonymous with Milwaukee, where brewers such as Fred Miller, Joseph Schlitz, Val Blatz and Frederick Pabst built their empires more than a century ago.

Even after heavy manufacturing of farm equipment, marine diesels and cranes became the dominant force in Milwaukee's economy, MillerCoors remains an institution, brewing about 10 million barrels of beer each year on the city's west side.

The love affair the city has for beer remains strong, evident in its Major League baseball team – the Milwaukee Brewers – paying homage to the city's beer makers while playing in Miller Park, sponsored by MillerCoors.

While beer consumption nationwide may be down, in Wisconsin it has increased a bit. In the first eight months of 2012, about 2 percent more beer was sold than the same period of 2011, the state revenue department said.

Milwaukee also remains a blue-collar town with a fair number of neighborhood taverns such as Zad's Roadhouse still serving a shot and a beer to the working class from early morning until late into the night, according to Milwaukee historian John Gurda.

"The scene is far from gone. I'm talking about saloons and bars being the communal living rooms of Milwaukee, and in many neighborhoods, that's still very much the case," Gurda said.

Bread & Broth needs help with Thanksgiving dinner

The Bread & Broth program at St. Theresa Catholic Church is observing its 24th anniversary of serving meals to community members in need by offering a special Thanksgiving dinner on Nov. 19 from 4-6pm in the Grace Hall.

Community support is needed in the form of key ingredients for the meal: celery, carrots, onions, oranges, fresh cranberries, fried onion topping, sausage, canned sweet potatoes, marshmallows, and butter. Cash donations are also greatly appreciated.

Make arrangements to drop off your contributions by Nov. 16 by calling Kathi at (530) 541.2551 or leave donations at the church rectory on weekdays between 9am-noon and 1-4pm.

Bread & Broth expects to serve 300 diners that night.

St. Theresa is located at 1401 Lyons Ave. The meal is open to all members of the community just as it has been every Monday at Grace Hall since 1989.

For more info, contact Diane Weidinger at (775) 588.3993 or dianeweidinger@yahoo.com.

Free lunch for veterans, active duty military

The Carson Valley Inn is serving a free spaghetti lunch to all veterans and active military – plus one guest – on Veterans Day.

The event will be in the Valley Ballroom from 11am to 4pm Nov. 11.

Veterans and active military personnel simply present a military ID for entrance.

There will be a Veterans Day colors presentation, the national anthem and an invocation at 11am. Country recording artist Lacy J. Dalton will sing “God Bless America’ at 12:30pm.

The Carson Valley Inn is located on Highway 395 in Minden.

Belgium spending the month of November celebrating fries

By Paul Ames, GlobalPost

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Fries may be devoured around the world, but only Belgians elevate the golden fingers of deep fried potato to the status of national treasure.

“It’s part of our history, our gastronomy, our culture in the widest sense of the word,” says Hugues Henry, a leading expert on the topic, at the launch of a monthlong celebration of the humble fry.

The author of a lavishly illustrated book about Belgian fry culture, Henry is director of a Brussels fries museum. “It’s about much more than just eating,” he explains. “Fries are deeply rooted in the Belgian mentality. Everybody grew up with a fries-stand on the corner of the street or in the town square.”

The Belgian capital is honoring its traditional fritkots — street stands whose paper cones of hot fries topped with mayo are to Brussels what pizzas are to Naples — at the climax of a yearlong gastronomic festival named Brusselicious.

Tourists arriving at Brussels airport and the city’s international rail terminal throughout November will be handed

a pink cardboard cone they'll be able to fill with fries at 17 fritkots around the capital for just $1.30.

For hearty appetites, the tourist board has laid out a walking tour linking a dozen of the best-known fritkots across the city.

There will be a vote for the best fries – the winning fritkot gets a sculpture of a giant cone of fries – and on Dec. 13 a night of debates on the history of frites.

The events have a clear message for Americans who, as any Belgian will tell you, have been misled about the origin of the fry.

"The French are still trying to claim the French fry is theirs," Martha Meeze of the Brussels tourist office complains. "We have proof that's not the case."

The debate goes back a long way. Some claim American Doughboys who were served fries in World War I by French-speaking Belgians came home calling them French fries. Others believe Thomas Jefferson brought the recipe home after his stint as ambassador in Paris.

According to the Belgians, there is documentary evidence that fries were given to the world in the 1680s by fishermen along the Meuse River near the city of Namur. They began supplementing their meager catch of bite-sized fried fish during hard winters by adding sticks of potato to bubbling oil.

Belgians find the term "French fries" doubly irksome because the French have long poked fun at their northern neighbors' love of frites. "Why does Saudi Arabia have oil and Belgium fries?" goes one typical joke. "Because when the world was created, the Belgians got to choose first."

Although Brussels frikots are increasingly viewed as part of

Belgian heritage, however, the often ramshackle street stands weren't always treated so warmly by city officials who saw them as eyesores or health risks.

"They were just slaughtered in the 1980s," Henry says. "There were 10,000 fritkots across Belgium at the end of the 1970s, and now only around 1,600."

Among those that survived and thrived is the Maison Antoine, which has been frying since 1948 and was once described by the *New York Times* as serving the "best French fries [sic] in the world."

Located a short walk from the European Union's headquarters, Antoine has provided fries to Belgium's royal family. Its late-night opening hours have also made it a post-show favorite with visiting musicians including the Rolling Stones and French rock idol Johnny Hallyday.

Fortunately, you don't need to be a rock star to eat there: Tough economic times are encouraging the fritkot revival.

"With this crisis, there are plenty of people who can't afford to go to a restaurant," says Antoine's fryer-in-chief Thierry Willaert. "For $5.80, you can have a cone of fries with sauce and a fricadelle [deep fried sausage], a chicken wing or a little skewer of meat. That's a filling dinner people can still afford."

Belgians argue about the ideal kind of potato to fry, whether vegetable oil or the traditional beef fat produces the tastiest frites and what's the best complement for your snack – mayo, ketchup or one of the myriad sauces available at any self-respecting fritkot. One matter on which they all agree, however, is that cooking them twice is essential for giving Belgian fries their crispy-on-the-outside-soft-in-the-middle trademark.

Henry's book "Carrement Frites" ("Squarely Fries", as yet

unavailable in English), is packed with frite facts such as the frying world record, which is held by Chris Verschuren of Kastel, near Brussels. He produced 1,500 kilos of fries in a not-stop sizzle that lasted 83 hours.

There are also sections on the fry in art, music, cinema and fashion – Brussels fashion house Piece of Chic has a fries-inspired collection called Magik Fritkot.

Fries have a political function, too, as a rare symbol of unity among Belgium's squabbling French and Dutch speakers. A youth movement that sprang up in 2011 against linguistic divisions that have paralyzed government was called the "Revolution des Frites."

At the launch of the fries festival last week, a scantily clad girl group called Frituur performed an eclectic set in styles ranging from gospel to gangsta rap, the lyrics extolling the delights of fries and a variety of sexual practices.

"We all love fries," explains a band member who goes by the name of Sista Fricadelle. "They give pleasure and they don't take themselves too seriously and that's what we're all about."

Famous Tahoe cheeseballs are ready for consumption

It's cheeseball time in South Lake Tahoe.

Orders are being taken at the gift shop at Barton Memorial Hospital, with pick up the next day.

Bring $8 in the form of cash or check. The money goes to the

Barton Auxiliary.

For more info, call (530) 543.5927 or (530) 573.1416.

Lake County making a name for itself in the world of wine

By Lettie Teague, Wall Street Journal

Near the end of the Civil War, the U.S. government gave away 160 acres of land to anyone willing to help settle the West. Vineyard owner Andy Beckstoffer has his own version of that Homestead Act: He has offered famous winemakers and vintners a free trip by helicopter to California's Lake County to check out his vineyards – along with "favorable terms" for the purchase of grapes.

Beckstoffer is one of the largest – not to mention most enterprising – vineyard developers in the county. He owns about 1,000 acres in Lake County and about the same amount of land in Mendocino and Napa counties. But right now Beckstoffer is particularly focused on Lake County, which he believes has the potential to produce some very good, very reasonably priced Cabernet.

And he's not alone; almost two months ago, the Gallo family made a very big commitment to the county with the purchase of the 2,000-acre Snows Lake Vineyard, whose 800 acres of vineyards are primarily planted to Cabernet Sauvignon. According to Gallo Senior Vice President Roger Nabedian, it's the largest purchase that Gallo has made in at least 10 years, in terms of both money and size.

In its pre-Prohibition heyday, there were close to 3,000 acres of vineyards in Lake County, and its lakefront resorts attracted top Hollywood acts. But over the years, the vineyards were almost entirely ripped out and replaced by more-profitable walnuts and pears (and the top acts all migrated to Lake Tahoe). By the 1980s, the walnut and pear markets had dried up as well, and Lake County's economy – and profile – declined even more.

But the past 10 years have been a time of resurgence and regrowth. There are now more than 8,000 acres of vineyards in Lake County and a few dozen wineries as well. (A few decades ago there were just four.) Five subappellations were drawn up, most notably Red Hills, Clear Lake and High Valley.

According to Beckstoffer, these subdistricts were created by growers as much to recognize their distinctive geography as to distance themselves from the less-than-illustrious Lake County name. "

Lake County had a reputation for bad wine in the 1990s," said Beckstoffer, naming the decade he first ventured north from Napa.

One of the reasons that the wines were so bad was the grapes were planted in "all the wrong places," according to Beckstoffer – an opinion I heard expressed several more times from several more growers during my visit last month. The grapes – particularly Cabernet – were planted down in the valleys instead of up in the hills, and the fruit didn't ripen properly. Valley wines also lacked the intensity of wines made from hillside fruit. Not that most wine drinkers had an opportunity to distinguish the difference between the two as most Lake County grapes were added to blends of various grapes from various places, including Napa Valley.

Beckstoffer and I had this conversation on the way to Steele Wines, one of the earliest wineries of modern Lake County,

founded by Jed Steele in 1991. Steele was the much-heralded creator of Kendall-Jackson Vintner's Reserve Chardonnay but left fame and fortune behind when he moved to Lake County and opened a decidedly low-key place of his own. The Steele winery is a world apart from his past corporate life, which is to say it's quintessential Lake County: a low-slung building just off of the highway, across from a purveyor of farm equipment and pet food.

Although many growers, including Beckstoffer, believe that Cabernet Sauvignon will make Lake County respectable if not renowned, others, like Steele, seem to believe that the right grape for Lake County is … everything. Steele turns out a veritable alphabet of wines—from Aligote to Zinfandel and just about every varietal in between. But not all of his fruit comes from Lake County – sometimes it's from places as far away as Washington state.

Other winemakers have backed other varietals, most notably Sauvignon Blanc or, in the case of Gregory Graham, Viognier. In fact, Graham, a Lake County pioneer, told me he thought Viognier would "rule the world" in the late 1990s. Although his Viognier is very good, that never happened, and Graham makes many other wines as well—Cabernet, Grenache, Chardonnay and Syrah.

Sonoma-based superstar winemaker David Ramey, who consults to Brassfield Winery in Upper Lake, believes that aromatic white wines like Albariño, Gewürztraminer and Roussane are the right grapes for Lake County. And he's quite keen on Malbec, too. That red varietal has a "tremendous future" in the county, said Ramey, though there are only 25 acres of Malbec in Lake County right now.

If the absolute best Lake County grapes have yet to be determined, they are, at least, still quite reasonably priced. For example, Beckstoffer charges at least $8,000 a ton for grapes from his top Napa Cabernet vineyard, while at his Red

Hills outpost in Lake (which he farms exactly the same way), the cost is $2,500 a ton for Cabernet. The Lake County average is $1,800.

And yet only about a third of the winemakers buying Beckstoffer's fruit are making Cabernets with a Red Hills label, he estimates. Most, like winemaker Dave Guffy of the Hess Collection in Napa, are using it in blends. (Guffy uses 45 percent Lake County fruit in his Hess Select red.) The same is true for other growers – Gregory Graham estimates that he sells 60 percent of his fruit to Napa Valley wineries who bottle it into a blend. (A wine may be labeled "Napa" as long as 85 percent of the fruit is from there.)

Peter Molnar, chairman of the Lake County Wine Grape Commission, makes wine in Lake County as well as Napa and Sonoma and showcases Lake County with his wine, Obsidian Ridge. His 2009 is a wine he calls "a hillside Cabernet for the rest of us," priced accordingly at $28 a bottle. Marked by dark fruit, currant and tobacco, it's intense and impressive—one of the best Cabernets I tasted on my visit.

Like many of the producers I met during my visit, Molnar doesn't live in the county, but several hours away in North Berkeley. Others commute from Sonoma and Napa. That's another big challenge for Lake County – finding winemakers who actually want to live there. Even though an acre of land costs a fraction of what it does in Napa (about $10,000 plus the cost of developing a vineyard), there hasn't exactly been a stampede of would-be resident vintners. Maybe it's just a matter of time – and a few more good wines in the market with Lake County on their labels. After all, it took not one but three Homestead Acts to get the West settled.

How not to starve when the power goes out

Publisher's notes: ***These tips are good for people who face any threat to being without power – which happens each winter in the Tahoe area.***

By NPR

Before you brave the rain, wind and inevitable lines at the already depleted grocery store today in the mid-Atlantic region, take a deep breath.

If you're a moderately good grocery shopper, you probably already have the food you need on hand to make it through the next few days if (when) we lose power due to Hurricane Sandy. (If not, best to find a shelter near you.) But you do need to take extra precautions that what you're preparing is safe.

Here are some tips we've picked up preparing for power outages over the years, and from around the web:

1. While you still have power, take stock of what you have in the freezer and the fridge. Use up leftovers and perishables like meat, eggs and dairy first, and decide which items you can't bear to lose, like those fancy frozen dumplings you've been saving, and cook them up for lunch or a snack right now. Blogger Jessica Berardi tells the *Washington Post* to fill up bags of water and stick them in the freezer to keep things extra cold or to double as ice packs once you have to move some items to a cooler.

2. Make a plan for using non-perishables like beans, tuna, pasta, cereal and canned fruit that leaves you with as few leftovers as possible – for example, one can of beans and a couple of cups of cooked rice will feed about three people for one meal.

3. Follow the comprehensive guidelines put out by foodsafety.gov for keeping things cold and safe once the power goes out. Biggest point – keep the fridge and freezer closed as much as possible to preserve food as long as possible. And, the rule of when in doubt, throw it out, definitely applies here.

4. Gather disposable plates, plasticware, cups, aluminum foil pans and a cooler to make meal clean up easier. A big psychological boost for the storm-stressed cook can be not seeing those dirty dishes piled up in the sink.

5. Locate the matches and check that the propane tank is full on your gas grill. Obviously you can't cook outdoors during the storm, but it's possible that your power will be out long after the storm has passed, and you can use your grill to boil water and heat meals if you have an electric stove rendered useless by the power outage. Solar cooking might be an option once the sun comes out.

6. Make it fun for the family. School's closed. Send the kids on a treasure hunt through your cookbooks to track down recipes for what you can make from the items you've got. They might even try something new in the spirit of adventure.

LTN reader wins tickets to Soroptimist wine tasting

Toogee Sielsch is the winner of two tickets to the Nov. 2 Soroptimist International South Lake Tahoe annual wine tasting event.



Thanks for sharing your wine story with *LTN* readers.

Tickets are $65 each and may be purchased from any SISLT member or online. The event often sells out, so tickets may not be available at Harrah's Lake Tahoe that night. Wine starts flowing at 6pm.

Sielsch is one of the hundreds of members of *Lake Tahoe News'* NEWS Team. Members can win all sorts of things. The wine tickets are an example of the give-aways. Before that we gave away two tickets to a Giants game – which happened to be the game where they clinched their division. Fill out the subscriber form to be part of the NEWS Team.

K's Kitchen: Squash soup satisfies on cold fall day

By Kathryn Reed

It's the first snowfall of the season and two butternut squashes are staring at me. It's time to turn them into something else.



Oh, and my Jeep is in the shop. I'm in fall mode and not winter so I'm not about to walk to the store to get the ingredients for the squash soup that I really like. It's time to wing it.

What I came up with was good, but I have to admit I like Teena Hildebrand's recipe better. She along with her husband own Narrow Gate Vineyards in Placerville.

Hildebrand's soup is richer, more elegant, thicker and better to serve to guests. Mine is easier, faster and great for the family.

Both make lots – which I always think is a bonus.

I'm including both recipes because both are worth trying. You decide which to serve when.

Kae's Squash Soup

1 onion, chopped

2 butternut squash, pealed, seeded, and cut into bite size pieces

Oil, to coat pan

8 C veggie broth

3 apples, chopped

2 tsp sage

½ tsp nutmeg

½ tsp white pepper

¼ C pure Vermont maple syrup

Coat pan with oil. Add onion. Cook until opaque. Add squash

and apples. Then add broth. Bring to boil. Puree soup in blender. Return to stove. Add spices and syrup. Once hot, serve.

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Hildebrand uses homemade veggie stock and says it makes a world of difference. I used store bought and was more than satisfied. All the comments below are from Hildebrand.

Butternut Squash, Golden Delicious Apple & Sweet Potato Soup

8 T (1 stick) butter, divide into 2T and 6T

2½ pounds butternut squash, peeled, seeded, cut into ½ inch pieces (about 6 cups)

1 pound sweet potato or yam, roasted and removed from skin

2 C chopped white or yellow onion

½ C chopped carrot

½ C chopped celery

2 small golden delicious apples, peeled, cored, chopped

1½ tsp dried thyme or 1 tablespoon fresh

½ tsp crumbled dried sage leaves or 1 teaspoon fresh

6+ C vegetable stock (can also use chicken stock)

1½ C fresh or unfiltered apple cider (I use Boa Vista unpasteurized from Apple Hill)

2/3 C creme fraiche (can substitute good quality sour cream)

½ C heavy whipping cream (optional, can also use half & half or tempered sour cream)

12 to 24 fresh small (1/2-inch long) sage leaves

Melt 6T butter in a heavy large stockpot or saucepan over medium-high heat. Add butternut squash, sweet potatoes, onions, carrots and celery; sauté until slightly softened, about 15 minutes. Mix in chopped golden delicious apples, dried thyme and dried sage. Add stock and 1 cup of the cider; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and simmer until squash and apples are tender, stirring mixture occasionally, about 30 minutes. Remove from burner and cool.

Puree soup in blender, food processor or with a hand held stick blender to a smooth consistency. Return soup to stock pot or saucepan and whisk in ½ cup whipping cream, thin with more stock if too thick. Season with sea salt and white pepper (optional).

Apple Cider reduction Creme Fraiche:

Boil remaining ½ cup of cider until reduced to ¼ cup. Cool. Place creme fraiche in small bowl and whisk in reduced cider.

Crispy Sage leaves in Brown Butter

Melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter in a small sauté pan over med-high heat. Heat until butter just starts to brown (do not burn) and add fresh sage leaves, cook until crisp and remove to paper towel lined plate.

Bring soup to a simmer, ladle into bowls, drizzle with apple cider reduction creme fraiche and top with a crispy brown butter sage leaf.

Soup and apple cider creme fraiche can be made up to 3 days in advance, covered separately and refrigerated.

Apple Hill growers not complaining about economy

By Kathryn Reed

CAMINO – People want their apples and they are willing to drive for them.

Parking lots were full Friday in Apple Hill and apple treats of all kinds were being consumed.

Granted, many of the license plates were from Nevada on Oct. 26 because a slew of workers had the day off in celebration of Nevada Day.

“Our Nevada customers are very loyal. They appreciate fresh produce,” Christa Campbell with Rainbow Orchards said.



Apple Hill orchards offer numerous varietals at their farms. Photos/Kathryn Reed

Still, those in the apple business say the economy has not hurt them except in terms of growth being slower.

“I keep expecting the economy to affect us, but business keeps

getting better," Denver Dale Martin of Denver Dan's told *Lake Tahoe News*. "People want fresh produce and you can't get any fresher than picking it off the tree."

Campbell said, "In the last couple years we've noticed a lot of people from Tahoe."

In part, she attributes this to Rainbow Orchards participating in the Sample the Sierra food and wine event, which is now on Labor Day weekend in South Lake Tahoe. One year she sent blueberries to a chef and another year blackberries. She thinks it was 60 pounds of her Triple Crown blackberries that were turned into a dessert.

"People know we're here because of Sample the Sierra," Campbell said.

She added that gas prices have not slowed the stream of cars into the area.

It's Mother Nature who makes or breaks a season.

The storm that brought snow to Tahoe this week dropped rain on the West Slope. This time of year all the wet stuff does is wash away the dust. It also slows the harvest because tractors tend to sink in the mud.

Campbell said the goal is to have the harvest wound up by the first hard freeze; otherwise the fruit won't be any good.

Apple varieties ripen at different times. Pink Ladies were just being brought into the selling area Friday afternoon. Campbell said this has become a favorite of consumers because they are a little sweet and a little tart, anything can be done with them, and they can last until June if refrigerated.

Cold weather is good for apples – it helps with the color, according to Scott Larsen, who is one of several family members working at Larsen Apples.

People are all over his property – some in the warehouse trying to figure out which of the nearly 20 types of apples to buy, others are enjoying lunch.

For the previous two years, Larsen only capitalized on about 10 to 20 percent of the crop because of the weather. A cold snap in the spring struck his Pippins and Pink Ladies. Still, this year's harvest is substantially better than the last two falls, with 60 to 70 percent of the apples making it to market.

One thing he said that is hard to keep up with is when the consumer catches wind of a varietal and it becomes the trendy thing to have. It's not like trees can be planted and immediately they produce the latest fad.

Martin of Denver Dan's says the same thing. The 80-year-old has been in the apple business for 50 years. While he likes to grow traditional apples (Macintosh, Jonathan, Goldens) on his farm where the customer does the picking, he said this year it's Honey Crisp people are looking for, while last year it was Pink Ladies.

It's Golden Delicious that does the best at Larsen and Grandpa's Cellar because they are good for eating, good for cooking and have a bit of a shelf life.

The aroma wafting from Grandpa's Cellar is overwhelming – in a good way. All things apple are being baked – and all from scratch.

Pat Scheuner opens the freezers – pies, struddles, turnovers, dumplings – are stacked high. These delicacies, more so than bushels of apples, are what keep the cash registers ringing. People come with coolers to haul the goods away to be baked at a later date.

"Our business is up this year," Scheuner shared with *Lake Tahoe News*.

She said one thing that is rare is this growing region adheres to strict quality assurances. Folks from the Apple Hill Agriculture Commission test for sugar and juiciness of the apples. No apples are picked until they are ripe.

“You won’t get an apple that doesn’t have flavor and juice,” Scheuner said. “We have standards. That is pretty unique.”

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Notes:

• Each orchard has different hours of operation. Many are open through Thanksgiving weekend, and then weekends only until the end of the year.

• Apple Hill Growers Association website has more information.

• Not all orchards have the same types of apples, some sell food already made, some sell food to take with you.

• Some orchards let you to pick the apples, while most have picked them.

• Many places have other items for sale – like pears, pumpkins and apple cider.

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