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Sen. Robert F. Kennedy addresses crowd at Naples Grape Festival

D&C Photo by Dick Eisenhart



RFK samples grape, Rep. Stratton waits decision.

Crowd Hails Kennedy at Naples Fest

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NAPLES—U.S. Sen. Robert F. Kennedy swept through this Finger Lakes community yesterday to inaugurate the second day's activities of the fifth annual Grape Festival.

He came by motorcade, some 30 minutes late, after a flight to Dansville Airport and a brief stop at Wayland.

He saw the bunting-bedecked community with the purple-painted fire hydrants, the nearby vineyards and an age-old winery with a brand new hospitality center.

He delighted hundreds who gathered to see him at two stops he made in the village and along the route he rode.

Sen. Kennedy also tasted the trademark fruit of the region after picking it right from the grape vines, and sipped a bit of the wine offered at a stop at Widmer's new "Niagara Chalet."

He jokingly pledged to drink wine whenever possible, predicted nothing but brightness in the future of the industry, and extolled the beauty of the Finger Lakes

Region, stating it is "most impressive and most beautiful."

Kennedy was introduced by Rep. Samuel S. Stratton, D. N.Y., of Amsterdam, first to the crowd gathered in the business district and later to those at the Widmer's Wine Cellar, where the new hospitality center was dedicated.

Kidding about wine sampling, he said he had promised his wife he would be put on a plane and sent home if he had too much.

Later he added that a campaign should be started to let the people of France and Germany know what real wine is, such as that from the Finger Lakes Region.

Kennedy said he would work not only to encourage the wine industry but also to encourage the tourist industry to "this beautiful part of our state."

Kennedy's appearance highlighted a fun-filled day which featured the festival parade yesterday afternoon and the festival ball last night.

Thousands lined the parade route to view the sun-splashed floats which honored the grape industry, and hear the 20 high school bands which marched to the theme of Grape Festival activities, "Songs of Yesteryear."

A pair of orchestras provided continuous dance music at the ball last night.

Grape culture exhibits and a carnival will continue throughout the day today, with festival activities ending at 9 p.m.