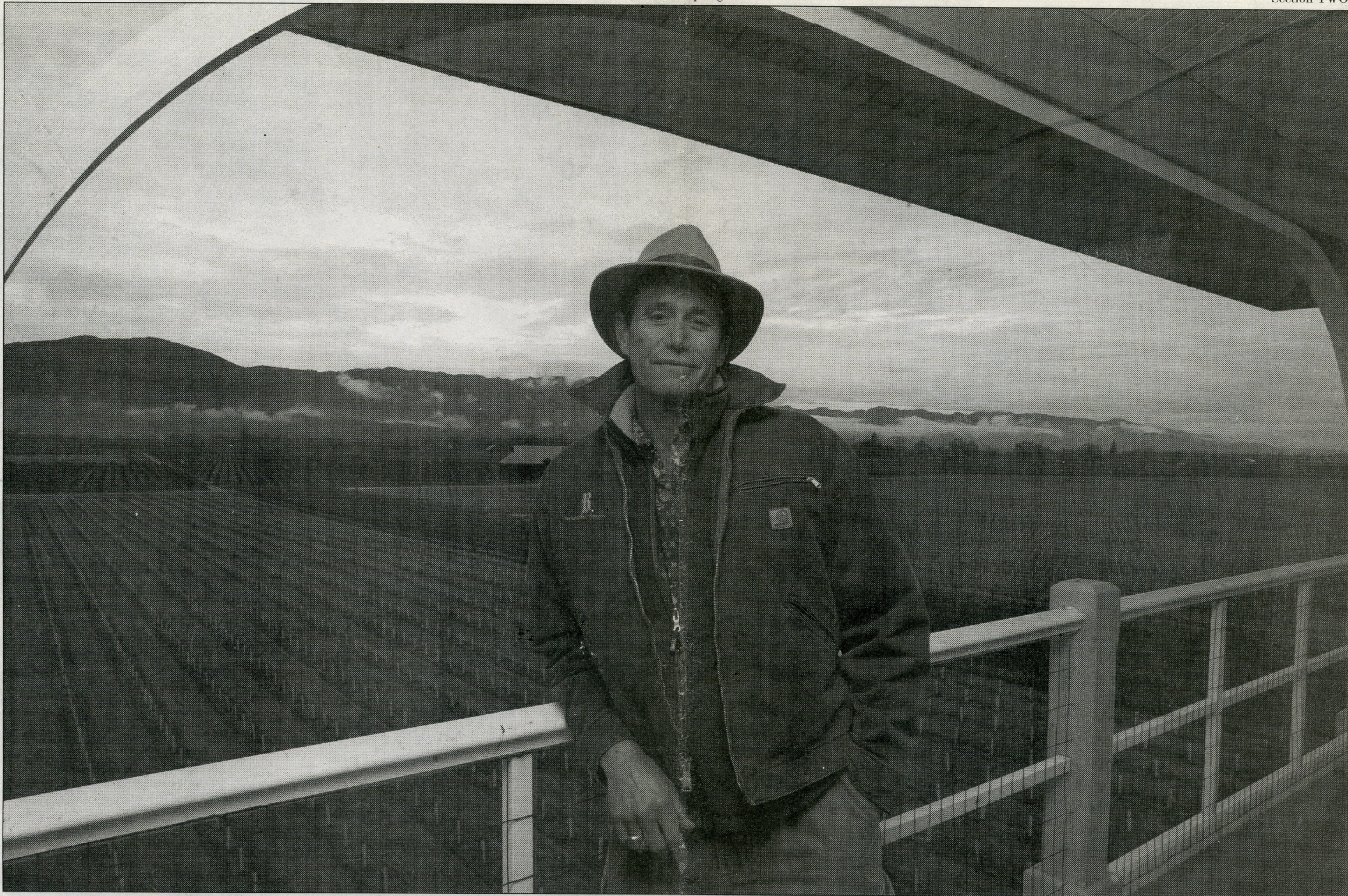


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ANDY BECKSTOFFER plans to make sure that the majority of his vineyards never become anything else by placing them under a conservation easement.

Vineyards forever!

A look at Andy Beckstoffer's property

Longtime grapegrower and Napa County landowner Andy Beckstoffer recently pledged to place a majority of his vineyards in conservation easements controlled by the Land Trust of Napa County. The easements are designed to prevent any future development. Below is an overview of Beckstoffer's holdings in the Napa Valley. Two sections he has already placed easements on are indicated by the yellow boxes.

Andy Beckstoffer owns property all over Napa Valley. His acres are all planted to vines, and he has entered an unusual agreement to make sure they stay that way

By GABE FRIEDMAN
From NVP Services

Andy Beckstoffer, perhaps Napa Valley's best known grapegrower, wants the bulk of his 1,000-plus acres of grapevines to remain farmland forever.

"The alternative is houses," he said last week while sitting in his expansive Rutherford office on a cold afternoon, fog visible on the nearby Vaca range.

Beckstoffer owns vineyards just about everywhere in Napa Valley. Nearly 400 acres in Carneros. More than 400 acres between Yountville and Rutherford, including a chunk of the noted Tokolan vineyard near the Oakville Grade. One hundred and fifty acres in St. Helena.

Two years ago he began altering deeds to two of his vineyards, one in Oakville near Brix Restaurant and another in Carneros. He

restricted future landowners from building houses or commercial structures, removing native trees, drilling or mining, dumping, erecting billboards, and subdividing either of two 45-acre vineyards. One exception is for an agricultural related building on the vineyard in Carneros.

"We think we're going to do 900 of our 1,000 (acres)" over the next 10 years, he said of his ongoing efforts to restrict development of his vineyard properties.

To really make sure it stays as agricultural land or open space, he called in the Land Trust of Napa County to defend the changes he made to the deeds. The land trust has tens of thousands of dollars in a legal defense fund to protect the land: Beckstoffer gave them the money.

Called a conservation easement, this legal

maneuver is the only sure way to protect Napa Valley from becoming the bedroom community that dozens of developers would love to make it, according to John Hoffnagle, executive director of the Land Trust of Napa County.

Even Napa County's tough zoning laws are amendable, Hoffnagle says. "We're thinking a hundred years out," Hoffnagle said. "What we're trying to do is quietly protect enough conservation easements that Napa County's agriculture vitality is protected."

The ag preserve, making agricultural the highest use of land throughout the county, went into effect in 1968 and can be overturned by a majority vote of the Board of Supervisors only after measure J expires. Measure J, a later initiative designed to make

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