



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Four men and one woman will take their places in the business history of Vermilion County when they are inducted into the Business Hall of Fame at the Vermilion County Museum next year. The project is the result of a partnership between Vermilion Advantage and the Danville Commercial-News. The public submitted two dozen nominations that were reviewed, resulting in the selection of four men and one woman who will make up the inaugural group to be honored in 2012: the late C. S. (Sherman) Paxton who over 100 years ago founded the Grab It Here grocery chain in Georgetown; the late Robert E. (Kish) Bookwalter a Danville attorney who was also an entrepreneur in business and industry and an early driver in developing local sports opportunities; Lou and Sybil Mervis, Mervis Industries and Foundation who have developed and grown countless businesses as well as providing educational opportunities for so many; and James "Big Jim" Darby, founder and owner of Greenwood, Inc, which includes Sunset Funeral Home and Memorial Park, Trigard, and Trigard Memorials. "Each of the individuals who will be recognized holds a significant place in the business history and economic development of our community, because they were/are trail blazers who not only worked hard to establish and grow their businesses, they also invested their time, financial resources and talents to grow and improve our community," says Vermilion Advantage President/CEO Vicki Haugen.

The new museum display, coordinated by Vermilion Advantage and the Commercial- News, will be unveiled during a reception honoring the first inductees at 2pm on Sunday, March 4, 2012 at the Vermilion County Museum. Each year, new inductees will be chosen from nominations and included in the museum display.

T. h. Snyder and DTI Office Solutions are partnering with Vermilion Advantage and the C-N to build a display that will be permanently housed at the museum, offering interactive presentations that will tell the stories of business and industry throughout the county's history, as well as provide biographical information about those who are named to the Business Wall of Fame. C-N Publisher Chris Voccio says "The Commercial-News is thrilled to partner with Vermilion Advantage on this initiative, as there are so many deserving business leaders, past and present, who should be recognized for their achievements."

In the recent past, Vermilion Advantage annually presented Business of Distinction awards, but Haugen says this is different. "The Business Hall of Fame will be a permanent display in the museum that honors current and past business people who have contributed so much to our growth, allowing museum visitors to see how our economic history unfolded, while giving all of us a clearer view of the work ethics and courage it took to build Vermilion County, and what it will take to take to sustain our present and grow our future opportunities," she says.