



January 28, 2008

To: Vermilion County Mayors

Subject: January Meeting Minutes

Mayors' Council was held on January 24th at Vermilion Advantage. Mayors attending: Mayor Vallangeon (Belgium), Mayor Eisenhauer (Danville), Mayor Ferber (Fairmount), Mayor Cook (Oakwood), Mayor Prillaman (Rossville) and Mayor Phillips (Tilton). Other guests included Chairman Jim McMahon and Bill Donahue (Vermilion County Board), Harriet Melk (Belgium) and Shannon Ruh (Hoopeston). Vicki Haugen, Todd Lee and Tracy Wahlfeldt from Vermilion Advantage attended as well.

Vicki Haugen spoke on three initiatives that Vermilion Advantage will be working on in 2008. Those are Vermilion Valley Pride/Birth2Work, Recruitment Strategies for Young Professionals and "Empty Nesters", and an elected officials' workshop.

The Vermilion Valley Pride (VVP) initiative is a result of the workforce initiative that Vermilion Advantage has been involved with for the last 8 years. While we feel that we have a strong educational offering, the statistics and data show that we are not where we want to be. The Birth2Work organization was impressed by the cooperation that we have in our county between businesses and education and are helping us to answer the question: Why aren't we seeing greater gains? This would include things like test scores, graduation rates, crime rates, etc. Handouts on many of these areas were distributed and are attached. Education is really at the center of all of the improvements we need to continue to make to be the type of communities we desire. VVP is a grassroots attempt to get community consensus on the importance and impact of lifelong learning. We will be having stakeholder meetings to discuss the issues and how to make an impact. Stakeholders groups include government, media, education, community based groups, healthcare and business clusters. We want involvement from all sectors, ages, socio-economic and cultural/ethnic backgrounds. We will be asking for the mayors' input and help in identifying people to participate in community forums meetings.

The second initiative involves new housing opportunities. In talking to young professional and "empty nesters," both groups are looking for very similar living accommodations that are not available in Vermilion County in any organized fashion or numbers at this time. The number people in the 55-65 age range is growing; escalating retirements are also increasing the outreach to new, graduating young professionals. In addition, many communities are creating incentives for these two groups to purchase or build new homes in their communities. Is this something that our communities would be interested in developing? We distributed examples of what Rantoul and Urbana are currently doing with such incentives. Hoopeston has been conducting a housing assessment and is looking at developing affordable, quality homes for seniors. It was

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James Walter, II	Walter Danville/ Henning Machine
Kerry Wienke	Vermilion County Farm Bureau
Rickey Williams, Jr.	Boys & Girls Club of Danville

suggested that this be furthered discussed at a future meeting.

Finally, Haugen asked for input regarding the content, structure and time/day for the annual "Elected Officials Workshop" hosted annually by Vermilion Advantage. The purpose of the workshop is to help officials to better understand the economic development process and the role that workforce development plays. Area businesses that have either located here or expanded present regarding the process they went through and global issues impacting their businesses daily. Jim McMahon and Bill Donahue attended the previous workshop and felt that it was very beneficial. It helped increase their knowledge of the economic development process, of the educational programs that are available and demonstrated the cooperation between communities and agencies. More information will be coming about the next workshop.

Todd Lee has joined Vermilion Advantage and will be taking over Mayors' Council as part of his area of responsibility. The next Mayors' Council is scheduled for April 25th. You are always welcome to bring guests to the Mayors' Council meeting or send your village officials in your place, if you are unable to attend. The topic for the April meeting will focus on area crime statistics, trends and options for prevention. We will invite Sheriff Hartshorn, Asst. State's Attorney Young, Director Thomason and others germane to this topic. Please plan to attend.

Tracy Wahlfeldt

Mayors' Council minutes will be posted on Vermilion Advantage's webpage. The link for the webpage is <http://www.vermilionadvantage.com/MayorCouncil/>.

