



TO: VERMILION ADVANTAGE MEMBERS AND MEDIA
FROM: VICKI HAUGEN
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A YEAR IN REVIEW/ THE YEAR AHEAD. A REPORT TO OUR MEMBERS

2006 was probably the best overall year Vermilion County has seen in well over a quarter of a century.

- ✓ We had 5 new location announcements and 3 expansions netting a promise of over \$417M in investment, construction or renovation of more than 305,000 SF, the development of 220 new acres of land, the creation of 315 new jobs and the retention of over 300 jobs.
- ✓ We experienced the lowest unemployment rate in over 30 years with a growing labor force.
- ✓ There were no major closings or permanent downsizing announcements.
- ✓ There were several major union contracts ratified without fanfare.
- ✓ Our workforce development initiatives continued to grow and attract regional and national attention.

While the following is certainly not all-inclusive, it is a good representation, by month, of the many milestones achieved, commenced or propelled to another level during the 2006 calendar year.

JANUARY

1. The work with the Bunge/ Biofuels America group turned from exploration to a serious intent to put a facility in Danville or other location options, depending on what obstacles could be overcome on what timeline.
2. Vermilion Transmodal began operations allowing the Dynegy Power Plant to remain operational.
3. We received state approval for a \$20,000 grant to begin a BioTech PLTW Engineering class at Danville High School in the fall of 2006.

FEBRUARY

1. Meeting with Ameren President and Representative Black to discuss leveling the playing field among the companies purchased by Ameren when it comes to construction allowances. At the time of the discussion, it ranged anywhere from 1, 3 or 5 times the first year's estimated annual expenditure – depending on if you were in former IP, CIPS or CILCO territory. A new ICC filing was ultimately approved that leveled all Ameren companies to 3 times.
2. We began working with the Hoopston committee and landowners to identify and option potential development tracts.

MARCH

1. University of Illinois team and Kern Foundation representatives visit DHS and DACC for Project Lead the Way Certification/ grant assessment. Later in the year, DHS became nationally certified and only one of a handful of schools in IL to be certified; DACC was awarded a Kern grant and began offering PLTW classes to all county high school juniors.

2. We met with east-side Danville landowners to further the discussions on gaining options for marketable sites for industrial development.
3. We began discussions with District #118 for Gateway to Technology classes at the middle-school level.
4. We started meeting with Madison Street home owners on Bunge/Biofuels behalf to see if enough land could be amassed to do this project in Danville.
5. Iowa-based Glaco Midwest announces new Danville location to serve local industry.

APRIL

1. We responded to the Request for Information put out on a "Project Hercules" that quickly became an intense 10-week process to lure Honda Motor Company to build a \$450M auto assembly plant in Vermilion County versus other sites in Indiana or Ohio.
2. Danville Renewable Energy announces intent to build \$100M ethanol facility in Danville.
3. Honored area high school honors students at 21st annual banquet.
4. Graduated 19th Leadership Tomorrow class.

MAY

1. We were a host site for a Reverse Trade Mission sponsored by the State of Illinois.
2. Began working to secure Sygma expansion at Danville facility.
3. We assigned our option on a 175-acre tract on East Main Street to American Ethanol for their due diligence and consideration of building a \$200M ethanol production facility.
4. Rockford economic development representatives bring a contingent to Danville to learn more about our Workforce Cluster system.
5. Bunge/Biofuels of America re-zoning process encounters delays.
6. Our pilot High Tech Edge class graduates and presents their Riverfront project plan.

JUNE

1. Vermilion Advantage YPN (Young Professionals Network) takes new direction under Tracy Wahlfeldt.
2. Our workforce clusters sponsor first summer Science Camp hosted at YMCA.
3. Bunge/Biodiesel facility focusing on neighborhood compromise and funding needs.
4. Bid for Honda ends as announcement is made for Indiana site.

JULY

1. Vermilion Advantage hires Kim Kuchenbrod to take over coordination and growth of workforce cluster education programs.
2. Steve and Barry's announce 50,000 SF store for Village Mall.
3. Bunge rezones and begins work with IDOT on access/ funding issues.
4. We begin working with ThyssenKrupp on "Project Possum" which ultimately is revealed as the Industrial Services Division.

AUGUST

1. College Express begins second year of classes at DACC and adds Project Lead the Way pre-engineering courses as additional offerings.
2. We begin the battle of the national comparisons on housing data.
3. McLane begins 80,000 SF expansion project.

SEPTEMBER

1. Carle expansion to Shoprite facility announced.
2. Bunge begins discussion with Anderson Street residents for home purchases.
3. Annual Economic Outlook Survey results announced showing strong projections for 2007.

OCTOBER

1. Project Possum/ ThyssenKrupp Industrial Services decision made for new Danville facility.
2. We take Character Counts program countywide and observe National Character Counts week.
3. We begin working on new expanded Career Lab concept with DACC

NOVEMBER

1. We host first area CEO Forum meeting to solicit active involvement by area CEO's in leadership and structural issues that can make local economy stronger.
2. ThyssenKrupp Industrial Services division breaks ground for their new 100,000 SF facility.
3. We begin working on new single-source ThyssenKrupp Machining Division concept.
4. Kim and Vicki make a presentation at the state Project Lead the Way conference.
5. Bunge/Biofuels of America groundbreaking for \$40M biodiesel facility.
6. Member Roundtable meeting held in Hoopston with record attendance.
7. The Sygma Network begins expansion construction work at Danville site.

DECEMBER

1. We host second CEO Forum meeting
2. Freight Car Services hits 100,000th car milestone in Danville.
3. Our first Engineer for Tomorrow student graduates from Bradley and begins permanent employment at ThyssenKrupp Forge.
4. American Ethanol begins process of exercising their option to purchase 175-acre site for impending 2007 construction.
5. Leatherneck Hardware moves to new 50,000 SF facility.
6. Chamber Dollars exceeds 2006 goal of \$100,000 by over 25%.
7. Kim makes presentation at National Youth Symposium in Chicago triggering much national interest in Vermilion County's workforce cluster and comprehensive workforce development initiatives.

In all, we worked with 39 new prospects as follows:

- 22 manufacturing
- 9 office projects
- 3 distribution projects
- 3 service/'other' projects
- 2 retail projects

2007

1. To start the 2007 year, 20 of these projects remain active, viable opportunities still considering Vermilion County.
2. Many more local expansion opportunities remain in consideration and new retail development interest in Vermilion County remains high.
3. Another opportunity that awaits us is national publicity of our Fithian site considered by Honda, as one of a few "mega sites" in Illinois and throughout the country.
4. Our Career Lab will become stationary at DACC and begin hosting all area 8th graders in late January, more than doubling the career opportunities to which they will be exposed.
5. We will at last be launching our new web site, which has been totally overhauled with the site selection consultant/ company in mind.
6. We will launch a new workforce DVD highlighting "Technology at Work in Vermilion County."
7. We will remain vigilant on our focus on the Young Professional – both retaining and growing the promotion of attracting new professionals by expanding our Workforce Cluster marketing to regional metro markets and university campuses.