



THE MUELLER RECORD

SUMMER 2005 NEWSLETTER



HIERONYMUS MUELLER MUSEUM OPENS FOR BUSINESS

This issue of the Newsletter is dedicated to the museum itself. Those readers who have seen the new building and exhibits know why we are so proud of our new museum. If you have not had the opportunity to visit, we hope that you will do so soon. The previous issue of the Newsletter featured a cover illustration of the architect's rendering of the building – this issue features a photo of the genuine article as seen from Eldorado Street.



54" Butterfly Valve
at front entrance

A GRAND OPENING



Jane Mueller speaks at Grand Opening.

With appropriate fanfare and celebration, the new Hieronymus Mueller Museum was opened for business on July 31, 2005. Jane Mueller hosted the program and briefly gave background on the events leading to the selection of the new building site and thanked the many people who had contributed to the planning and building of the new museum (see *Thanks for Making it Happen*). Decatur Mayor Paul Osborne recognized the Museum for its preservation of history and its part in Decatur's larger effort to attract attention to the city's treasures. Mueller Co. President Dale Smith spoke of the value that history brings to the company and of the enthusiasm with which the company has embraced its

new neighbor. Mary Turner, Executive Director of Illinois Association of Museums, recognized the quality of the facility and exhibits provided by the new museum and the place of the Mueller Museum in preserving a small piece of the larger history of the city, state and nation. Finally, Michael Mueller representing the family expressed pride in the facility and thanked those who had made it possible.

The opening was attended by approximately 100 invited guests – family members, museum members, volunteers and individuals who guided the facility to completion. Following the speeches, the museum was at last opened for inspection as guests poured over the exhibits. The most significant additions to the exhibits are several large graphics from the photo archives, a large model of a sailing ship, a display of vitreous ware, a revamped WWII display, and a fascinating and realistic look at the production process in the foundry and plant. Over the ten-year history of the museum, new artifacts have been donated and many of those items have found their way into the exhibit cases.

A few minor tasks still await completion. The permanent bronze entrance doors are still in California where the pace of life must be cadenced by an armless drummer. The Mueller Family Tree exhibit was not installed for the opening of the museum but is now in place. Much of the stored collection – the really odd and bizarre relics that the public doesn't see and may not want to see – is still in the basement of the old museum awaiting transport to the basement of the new building. A half dozen small details of the building still need the attention of the builders as one would expect with any new structure. All of those things will be completed in the near future and none of them prevents our present enjoyment of the museum.

Mueller Co. Welcomes a New Neighbor

(The following article is contributed by Bob Abbott of Mueller Co. writing on behalf of the company.)

The history of the company that has borne the Mueller name since 1857 coincides with the history of the Mueller family from the time Hieronymus Mueller settled in Decatur shortly after he immigrated to the United States from Germany. The important event of the company and the Mueller family are so entwined well into the 20th century that telling the story of one also tells the story of the other.

Any company in operation for nearly 150 years, such as Mueller Co., naturally has accumulations of documents and artifacts tracing the company's operations. It's likely the vast majority of this material recounts the mundane, day-to-day statistics of doing business – rather dry reading and certainly not the sort of thing people would seek out in a museum, even in an archival setting. But this is where Mueller Co. differs. The record of inventions, product innovations, business firsts, and recognitions for service to country and community – not to mention the development of the Mueller-Benz car, which by itself accounts for a fascinating record of early automotive history worthy of its own museum – is filled with accounts on inventive genius, exhibits at world expos, and stories of wartime developments that helped turn the tide in our country's favor. Most of this historic material, along with the records for early products and advertising promotions, was turned over to the Mueller Museum for preservation when the original building was opened almost ten years ago.

As you might guess, when the company was asked if it would consider having the new museum building as a part of its Eldorado Street campus, the interest was immediate and the answer positive. Naturally, it seemed fitting to have the collection closer by and there were other advantages to both the company and the museum.

Mueller Co. is the only one in its industry to employ a fulltime staff to train customers in the application of its products. Groups of customers are brought to the company's headquarters frequently during the year to learn how to use Mueller products and understand why they are among the most trusted and sought after in the industry. Having the Museum directly accessible to these trainees will allow it to provide the historic perspective of this story.

During the early discussion about how the expanded space in the new museum building could be used to expand upon the company's products and operations, it became clear that having the Museum at the headquarters location would allow us to tell another important story. Ever since Hieronymus first built on this property in the late 1880's, there has been a steady progression of new manufacturing technologies introduced into the company. As important as products are to the company's success, it's largely the use of the most modern and efficient manufacturing processes operated by dedicated employees that allows the quality of the products to be the best in our industry. In the past decade, millions of dollars have been invested in state-of-the-art computer manufacturing processes and employee training. Recently, Illinois Governor Blagojevich visited the Mueller brass foundry in Decatur when the company announced it would invest \$8 million to keep its process there at the leading edge of foundry technology. The new exhibits at the museum featuring the historic and current day process will help employees, customers, and other visitors to see what is being done at this and other Mueller plants to make Mueller products the best they can be.

And of course, the cooperation that has existed for years between the company and the Mueller family, its Foundation and the Museum meant the suggestion to combine the two at this location would be considered in the spirit of doing all that the company could. In addition to giving the museum a long-term lease for the property it needed, the company agreed to help with project financing to permit construction of the new museum building to commence without delay. Then, during the development of the expanded exhibits, the company worked closely with the museum staff to identify physical items from the operating factory and foundry that could help to provide context for the new exhibits about the company and its products.

With the grand opening of the expanded museum, there is not a great deal more for the company to do, except to send the Hieronymus Mueller Museum, its staff and the Mueller family the company's warmest wishes for success and assurance that Mueller Co. will remain nearby, not just in location, but also in continued support of making sure Hieronymus Mueller's legacy is remembered here in Decatur.

Thanks for Making it Happen

There are many minds and hands necessary to travel from the idea stage to a completed museum and, while space does not permit the recognition of every individual, we do wish to mention a few special contributors and companies deserving our thanks.

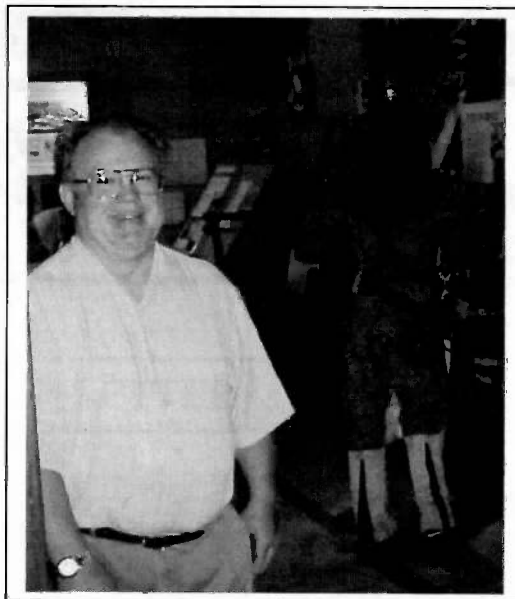
Jim Masey, a Decatur real estate agent, suggested the site, which turned out to be ideal for our new building. **Paula Cross**, former Museum manager, assisted with early plans on the new building. **Dale Smith**, President of Mueller Co., graciously arranged for the land to be made available and threw the support of the company behind the project. Many others with Mueller Co. were invaluable in their assistance but a few individuals deserve special thanks – **Darrell Jean, Dan Curry, Bob Abbott, Christy McEldowney, Dan Carrico, Kevin Steele, Nevin Alwardt, Greg Lock, Mike Manion**. Christy-Foltz, Inc., our general contractor, did a first-class job and should be proud of the building they provided for us. We extend a special thank-you to **Hal Schinzler, Bob Davis, Brian Blade** and **Dale Dalluge** of Christy-Foltz. We appreciate the design work of **Larry Livergood, Jim Fouse, Tom Ingles** and **Chris Maslouski** of Architectural Expressions. Our exhibits were planned and executed by **Cindy Bray** of the Barking Dog Design Group in Oklahoma. The legal dealings were handled by **John Cobb**. Our landscaping miracles were performed by **John Ropp and family** of the Elwin Tree Farm. The lobby furnishings which came from Mueller Lodge were refinished by **Jan Anderson** and reupholstered by **Jerry Cole**. Our small army of volunteers under the command of **Betty Wheatley** has assisted with the transfer of artifacts and displays from the old building to the new. Obviously, these names are but a few of the many laborers, inspectors, advisors, and supporters involved. To all of the named and un-named, the Mueller Family Foundation and museum staff give a sincere and hearty *thank you!*

We also wish to recognize those firms which served as subcontractors with Christy-Foltz.

- Ornamental Metalworks of Decatur – suppliers of structural steel
- Gerdau Ameristeel of Decatur – supplies of rebar and concrete accessories
- Dunn Company of Decatur – installers of asphalt and base
- Schmoldt and Daniels Masonry of Decatur – masonry work
- Craftmasters, Inc. of Decatur – roofing and sheet metal work
- Polands, Inc. of Decatur – skylight supplier
- Long Elevator and Machine Co. of Springfield – elevator and installation
- Ideal Refridgeration of Mt. Zion – heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems
- Burdick Plumbing and Heating Co. of Decatur – plumbing
- Superior Fire Protection Systems of Forsyth – sprinkler system
- Bodine Electric of Decatur – electrical work
- Central Illinois Ceiling & Interiors of Decatur – suppliers of drywall, studs, insulation and ceiling materials
- Commercial Floor Covering of Urbana – suppliers and installers of carpet and tile
- G. J. Builders Hardware of Decatur – suppliers of doors, frames, hardware
- Cabinet Corner of Argenta – cabinets and countertops

MIKE DEATHERAGE TO MANAGE NEW MUSEUM

The Mueller Museum has a new manager to go With its new building. Mike Deatherage has Actually been on the job nearly five months doing the behind-the-scenes work in preparation for the grand opening. During that time he has undertaken a variety of tasks including regular visits to the construction site to check on details and progress, working with the exhibit designers on new and refurbished displays (Mike actually built several of the exhibit pieces), moving room the old building into the new, speaking to civic groups about the new museum, and generally trying to keep up with the ordinary paperwork of membership renewals, newsletters and such.



Mike is originally a Midwesterner having grown up in Iowa and attended Grinnell College (B.A. in economics) during the late 1960's. He worked a campus job as an architectural draftsman doing remodeling projects and one campus building – a job that served as good background in working with the new museum construction. Mike left Iowa to attend graduate school at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia earning a Masters Degree in education. The following year he was drafted and served in the army as a staff sergeant in Vietnam with the 101st Airmobile Division. After the two years in the service, Mike taught government and economics in an Alexandria, Virginia high school, as well as coaching wrestling and serving as class sponsor for 800 seniors. The high school was T. C. Williams High School made famous by the movie “Remember the Titans.”

In 1979 Mike opened a used bookstore in an old house he remodeled in Arlington, Virginia. This venture was intended as a hobby but soon a choice had to be made between teaching and bookselling and the books won out. A long career in the book business provided training in preservation and cataloguing as well as an opportunity to both teach and learn in interacting with customers.

Mike met a Decatur girl, Kim Soman, in 1994 and they were married in 2000. Kim loved Decatur and Mike was ready for a return to the Midwest so the old book business of Virginia joined Novel Ideas, a used book and gift shop in Decatur which Kim had opened in 1995. The book business in Decatur depends heavily on Internet sales and Kim has experience in running the business herself so Mike's time schedule had the flexibility to take on the extra task of managing the museum.

Mike has great expectations for the museum as an educational opportunity for the community and a showplace for both Mueller family and company history. He looks forward to meeting anyone who shares in those interests.

HIERONYMUS MUELLER MUSEUM

420 WEST ELDORADO STREET
DECATUR, ILLINOIS 62522

HMPF

Annual Membership Information

Student/Senior Citizen Membership: \$15

Free admission for member and one guest, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

Regular Membership: \$20

Free admission for member and one guest, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

Family Membership: \$25

Free admission for member and up to four guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

***Support Membership: \$50**

Free admission for member and up to four guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

***Sponsor Membership: \$100**

Free admission for member and up to four guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items.

***Patron Membership: \$500**

Free admission for member and guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items, recognition on museum donor board.

***Benefactor Membership: \$1000**

Free admission for member and guests, museum newsletter subscription, 10% discount on gift items, recognition on museum donor board.

* A portion of these membership fees are tax deductible.
Please circle the type of membership preferred.

Please send this form and payment to

HIERONYMUS MUELLER MUSEUM

420 West Eldorado Street
Decatur, Illinois 62522
(217) 423-6161

Name (Mr./Mrs./Ms./Miss/Mr. & Mrs.)

Address

Phone

The Hieronymus Mueller Museum is a privately funded non-profit museum and depends upon donations for its operations.

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