

Economic Alliance offers Velociti

The Economic Alliance of Kankakee County now offers Velociti to its partners. Useful for business attraction and lead production, Velociti is a cloud database of more than 40K global growth companies across 23 sectors.

Businesses are data mined against custom search criteria and scored for foreign direct investment and innovation potential using business attraction trends and comprehensive predictive analytics. The Alliance's subscription access allows for supply chain mapping and the addition of 30 new targeted companies per month for analysis. Company profiles provide complete key contact information, including email addresses. Contact their office to learn more about this system and/or to request a customized report or the addition of a company to the system.

In partnership with Kankakee Public Library and the Kankakee County Chamber of Commerce, the Alliance still provides ReferenceUSA access. This web-based tool provides GIS-optimized, strategic business intelligence to those conducting corporate market and competitive analysis for business and consumer applications. Information provided by the system includes U.S. business data, including business category, leadership and contact information, employee size, sales volumes, business expenditures, credit ratings, franchise and brand information, headline news, etc.; U.S. historical business data; U.S. consumer/lifestyle data, including median home values, median home income, personal interests, etc.; and U.S. jobs/internships data, including company name, business type, positions available, etc.

ReferenceUSA data can be configured with presentation-ready visualization tools, including user-friendly charts, graphs and maps, as well as

downloaded in spreadsheet format in preparation for direct mailing or other outreach. Contact emails are available through the system for an additional fee.

The Alliance also offers Economic Modeling Specialists International (EMSI). In partnership with the Grundy, Livingston, Kankakee Workforce Board, EMSI is used to access and analyze labor market data, including job postings, occupations, industries, demographics, educational programs/market demand, supply chain mapping, economic impact modeling and more. Contact the Economic Alliance to learn more or to run a customized report.

The Alliance also has access to Synchronist, the Alliance's business retention database where data is collected, stored and synthesized to help inform organization's priorities and programming. Customized, aggregated reports can be run to illuminate local growth activity including capital investment, expansion and new hiring, as well as common barriers to growth among Kankakee County's top employers. In 2017, the KCCC will begin adding like data on the community's smaller companies to the Synchronist system. Contact the Alliance to learn more or to run a customized report.

The Alliance office and also create a customized survey with questions and multiple choice answers, generate a unique link for sharing and produce comprehensive response reports through Survey Monkey.

In addition, the Alliance launched a new redeveloped website featuring comprehensive GIS functionality with integrated data, including Enterprise Zone, TIF, SSA and other asset overlays, along with real-time demographics.

Visit KankakeeCountyED.org or follow the Alliance on LinkedIn and Twitter.

Hotel development

by **Laura McElroy**
Managing editor

Village of Bradley trustees again discussed a proposal from Hampton Inn by Hilton to build a new hotel off the Ken Hayes circle drive around Northfield Square Mall during their Monday, Jan. 9, 2017 meeting.

If built, the hotel would feature 97 rooms, fitness center, pool and free breakfast. In addition, developers proposed building a 5,000-square-foot banquet facility as a second phase of the project. There would be no restaurant on-site and food for special events at the banquet facility would be catered in.

The developers asked the village for certain incentives including a waiver of plan permit fees and a 100 percent sales tax abatement for seven years.

In the past, the village has given businesses incentives, but has never given a 100 percent sales tax abatement for seven years. Trustees recom-

mended a five-year agreement with a 100 percent abatement in the first year with a 20 percent reduction in the following years.

The sales tax abatement would only be for the village's portion of the sales tax.

Mayor Bruce Adams met with the developers to re-negotiate the matter. The developers agreed to the village's proposal and will prepare a written request for the board to act upon at a future meeting.

In other news, public works director James Bessler announced his retirement after three-and-a-half years with the village. His last day will be Friday, Jan. 13. "I want to thank the mayor and trustees for their support during my time here. It's been pleasurable," said Bessler who plans to spend his retirement in Florida.

Mayor Adams added, "You have professionalized the public works department. You brought a wealth of knowledge and, for that, I thank you."

The Story of Twin Oaks— in the words of Thomas Durham: Part 1

by **Dr. James Paul**

Good day to thee! When I first laid eyes on Twin Oaks in 1834, I was almost 50 years old, but I knew this was where I wanted to spend the rest of my life. I was amazed at the beauty of the land between the Bourbonnais Trace, Bourbonnais Creek and Kankakee River. Twin Oaks (two large burr oak trees) was where we camped for the night on our walk from the Quaker settlement of Vermilion Grove, south of Danville, to Chicago. I had been hired by Gurdon Hubbard to build a brick warehouse on the corner of LaSalle and S. Water St. in Chicago.

Hubbard must have been impressed by the new masonry Vermilion County Courthouse that I had just finished in Danville.

Twin Oaks was located just west of the Chicago to Danville Rd., about the midway point or 65 miles south of Chicago, where the road intersected with the Bourbonnais Trace. In later times, the address of my farm house became 459 N. Kennedy Dr., Bourbonnais, after the Bourbonnais Trace was renamed Kennedy Dr. — one of the two Twin Oaks still stands south of the Perry Farm House, the other was diseased and cut down in 1990, but a slice of its 200-year-old trunk is displayed south of the smoke tree behind the Letourneau Home/Museum on the Adrien M. Richard Heritage Preserve Arboretum.

After completing the warehouse in Chicago, I purchased the 160-acre Twin Oaks portion of the Jonveau Reserve from Hubbard who was an agent for the land transfers when the Potawatomi were compelled to move west of the Mississippi. This acreage extended from the prairie on both sides of the Bourbonnais Trace to the wet prairie or marsh located west of the Bourbonnais Trace to the Kankakee River.

In 1838, I purchased another 164 acres extending my property 83.88 acres to the east and the hardwood forest and limestone canyon "Indian Caves" to the west where the Bourbonnais Creek enters the Kankakee River.

In 1835, my wife Margaret (1796-1882), who we called Peggy, and I moved our nine children and possessions from Vermilion Grove to Twin Oaks. My family and I were cordially greeted by the resident Potawatomi. They even constructed a wigwam of boughs for us to use until our log cabin was built. Peggy gave birth to three more of our children at Twin Oaks. We were the first Quaker family and first American-born family to settle in French-Canadian Bourbonnais Grove. By the summer of 1835, I was cultivating 40 acres at Twin Oaks.

By 1840, we had constructed a timber framed I-shaped two story "tidewater stack" farm house and three-bay English barn. The horse barn was built shortly thereafter along with chicken coops, granary, corn cribs and tool sheds.

As a Virginia-born individual of Quaker faith, my urge to move north was motivated by my support of abolition and opposition to slavery. In the early 1800s, I moved from Virginia to Eastern Tennessee where I met and married Peggy Wyly in 1811. We then moved to Terre Haute, IN; then to Vermillion Grove outside Danville; and finally to Bourbonnais Grove.

In 1836, parts of Cook and Iroquois counties became Will County, so my farmstead became part of the Rock Village precinct of Will County. I was elected Rock Village precinct commissioner in 1836 for a two-year term. During my tenure as a commissioner, a log school house was built in 1837 and was located just north of the junction of the Chicago-Danville Road and Bourbonnais Trace. The log structure, a 20' x 20', 1 1/2-story building, was the first Bourbonnais Grove school to serve students from 1837 to 1848. In 1837, I also built the Early Classical Revival brick home of Noel LeVasseur (this home was later demolished in 1885 for the construction of Roy Memorial Chapel on the St. Viator College campus which stood until it burned down in 1906. The site is just north of present-day Olivet Nazarene University's Chapman Hall).

During my tenure as commissioner, I successfully petitioned that the Bourbonnais Trace become a state road (now Rt. 102). In 1849, I became postmaster of Bourbonnais Grove. I remained in the postmaster position until the 1853 incorporation of Kankakee County. My home was a natural mail and stage coach stop, and my home was known for its rural hospitality. Even my friends who were not family members called me "Uncle Tommy Durham".

I died on March 14, 1854 at the age of 69 and am buried at my beloved Twin Oaks with a modern grave marker in the Millennium Garden. Thou art fortunate that my Twin Oaks has been preserved for thee as an historical and recreational site.

For the full story of Twin Oaks (Perry Farm Park and Durham-Perry Farmstead), go to the link on the Bourbonnais Township Park District website http://www.btpd.org/park_history_4_2934382977.pdf.

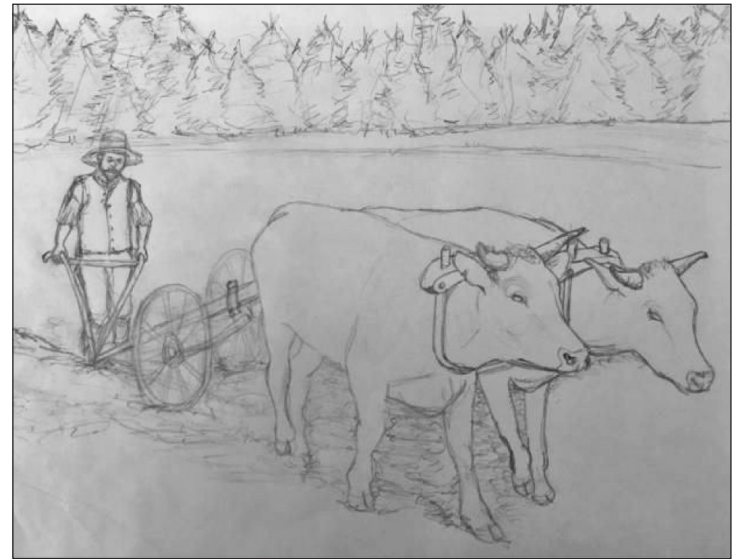
Dr. Paul is a member of the Perry Farm Living History Advisory Committee whose purpose is to teach the community about the history of the Durham-Perry Farmstead.

He has portrayed Thomas Durham in the Lifelong Learning Institute courses at Kankakee Community College, at Durham-Perry Farmstead summer camps and at community events.

The Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and promoting local history. Monthly meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month March to December. Museum hours are 1-4 p.m. first and third Sundays of each month, March to December or by appointment.

Visit bourbonnaishistory.org, on

Facebook at [facebook.com/bourbonnaishistory](https://www.facebook.com/bourbonnaishistory) or call 1-815-933-6452.



Sketch by Christina M. Bradley © 2016.

Thomas Durham and his team of oxen broke open the prairie at Twin Oaks in 1835.