



Arrow Signs and Outdoor Advertising Donates New Sign for Riverbender Community Center

by Jeff Allsman, Executive Director
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ALTON – Lance DeMond doesn't care about having his name in lights. He just wants to make sure everyone else's is.

The DeMond family are third generation business owners in the outdoor sign and advertising industry. On Thursday, their company, Arrow Signs and Outdoor Advertising, enhanced awareness at the Riverbender.com Community Center by donating and installing a brand new lighted sign on the front of the building on Third Street.

“Since, John (Hentrich) started operating the Center, about 10 years ago, I've tried to help out as I could,” DeMond said. “We helped with some electrical things back in the beginning. We try to do that sort of thing for nonprofit organizations in the community when we can.”

DeMond generously donated not only the cost of manufacturing the sign, but also the labor to install it.

“The community center is a very worthwhile organization,” he said. “They do great things for area youth down there. And we like being part of it. This is a great help to them and we're proud to do it. This opportunity was a perfect fit for us.”

DeMond has grown up in the sign industry. A sign painter and sketch artist by trade, he cut his teeth in the business with his parents' sign company, Star Sign Company, which opened in Alton in 1954. He began his own business in the basement of his house in 1981. After outgrowing his basement and moving to Godfrey Road for a time, Arrow Signs and Outdoor Advertising is now located on Alby Street in Alton.

“In the beginning, every project we did was done by hand,” he said. “Whether a commercial sign or a billboard, it was all painted by hand. But, I was limited by what I could create in my basement. I couldn't make any signs bigger than six-foot by 12-foot. I had to relocate.”

The digital era has all but ended the demand for hand paintings. And Demond has evolved with the times. While not missing the days of hand-painting, he has transitioned to more advanced and complicated work. With bucket and boom trucks, about half of his business now relates to digitally produced billboards and electronic message centers along highways. He's also earned the trust of some national franchises that have recruited his company to service their signage needs. And he's certified to assist with Ameren UE's energy efficiency program in which he analyzes commercial parking lots and retrofits lighting to reduce energy consumption and create substantial savings for customers.

But wasn't hasn't changed is his desire to assist organizations that can benefit from his company's expertise.

"Dad understands the heartache and the growing pains of small businesses and nonprofits," his son Lance Arrow DeMond said. "The community center does great things for the community. It's good for the community and that's what we're about."

"The Center continues to be blessed by the generosity of local business owners who identify a need and step to the forefront to demonstrate their support of the Center in tangible ways," said Riverbender.com Community Center Executive Director Jeff Allsman. "Community and business leaders who have a philanthropic spirit are invaluable partners for organizations like the Center. We are grateful for the DeMond's willingness to continue to share their talents and expertise in their field in ways that benefit the Center. I'm sure the new lighted sign will enhance the awareness of the Center and I hope all of those who pass under it and they enter the Center will think about and thank the DeMonds and Arrow Signs and Outdoor Advertising, Inc."