

19th Annual BUSINESS HALL OF FAME

A sense of place, a sense of pride

We choose, and those moments of choice are catalysts for change. Simple, daily choices build businesses, empower service, encourage learning, connect lives. Community building — it begins in moments when we simply act on what we know, reaching for something beyond the boundaries of ourselves, living who we really are. Things grow, and our collective choices add up to a fascinating, better place to live.

The Free Press and the Greater Mankato Chamber of Commerce would like to congratulate the following members of our business community and say thanks for their energy, their commitment and the results of their efforts.

ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

Dan & Angie Bastian, Angie's Kettle Corn

Dan and Angie began operations of Angie's Kettle Corn exclusively at outdoor events in 2001. They started leasing space at Ray's Market and began distribution to retailers in Greater Mankato and the Twin Cities. Their company now manufactures approximately 2000-3000 bags per week. The company has grown to one full-time and 10 part-time employees. Dan and Angie are expanding their business with the purchase of a building at 424 Belgrade Avenue in North Mankato and will be moving all manufacturing operations to that site, as well as a future retail outlet. Angie's Kettle Corn is the exclusive kettle corn distributor at Midwest Wireless Minnesota Vikings Training Camp and all home games. Dan and Angie also donate much of their time and product to numerous community fundraising events and youth programs in both Mankato and the Twin Cities including the Salvation Army, March of Dimes and YMCA. In addition, they recently donated the proceeds from one Vikings game day to Hurricane Katrina relief.

DISTINGUISHED BUSINESS

(Awarded to a business located in Greater Mankato for 5-15 years)

Coughlan Publishing

Coughlan Publishing began with two employees in 1990, when Bob Coughlan purchased a financially-troubled publishing company. The Coughlan family now owns six publishing companies: Capstone Press, Children's Library Resources, Compass Point Books, Picture Window Books, Red Brick Learning and Stone Arch Books. These companies now employ 226 people who are eligible for a scholarship program for their continuing-education, and are also offered expansive in-house training. With the companies' growth, advancement opportunities have been abundant. Six family members are actively involved in the day-to-day management activities of Coughlan Publishing. The business has a long history of philanthropy in the community. Key projects include Habitat for Humanity, Toys for Tots, Junior Achievement, Holiday Sharing Tree, and many reading programs in area schools. Coughlan Publishing gives away thousands of books each year to area schools, libraries and nonprofits. They sponsor the Summer Reading program at the Blue Earth County library, reaching over 3,000 children each year. They also donate thousands of books as part of the Greater Mankato Area United Way's Birth to Five Initiative, where children receive one age-appropriate book in the mail each month. In response to the recent global natural disasters, Coughlan Publishing donated cash and thousands of books to libraries that were destroyed. The companies also have responded by creating children's books that explain the causes and impact of natural disasters. The Coughlan family has been an integral part of our business community since 1885, when the Coughlan family started a stone quarry. As a result of their desire to diversify their business holdings, the family has since purchased Mankato Screw Products and more recently expanded into the publishing industry. The result of the Coughlan family's desire to grow their businesses in Greater Mankato, has offered area residents and graduates of local post-secondary institutions increasing access to numerous employment opportunities.

HALL OF FAME

(Awarded to a business located in Greater Mankato for over 15 years)

McDonald's of Mankato

Jerry and Marilu Bambery have been part of the McDonald's Corporation for over 46 years, and first joined the Greater Mankato business community 20 years ago as Owner/Operators. They now own and operate three Mankato restaurants as well as several others in surrounding communities. Jerry has been actively involved in Boy Scouts as a board member for over 10 years, has served several terms as a board member of the MSU Foundation, and is an active board member for the Salvation Army and Yellow Ribbon Suicide Prevention organization. Jerry is also a member of Rotary International. He encourages his employees to follow his example by supporting their continuing education and community involvement. Jerry and Marilu continuously give to local organizations and foundations, as well as support charities through many events at their local McDonald's restaurants. Large cash contributions have been awarded to Ronald McDonald House Charities, the Salvation Army, Boy Scouts, Yellow Ribbon, Mankato Symphony, March of Dimes, United Way, House of Hope, Mankato Area Sober School, Mankato Area Children in Need, and many others. Greater Mankato McDonald's restaurants also host community fundraising events including: McCommunity Nights, where area nonprofits receive a percentage of sales; McEducator Nights, where area schools receive a percentage of sales; "Cooks for Kids," where the Bambery's employees travel to the Twin Cities on a regular basis and cook for families staying at the Ronald McDonald House; and World Children's Day Book Drive, where McDonald's partners with local businesses and customers to collect books for kids. As a result, more than 13,000 books have been collected and distributed to area youth.

Congratulations to all Business Hall of Fame Award recipients,
both past and present.

We are proud to share our community with you!