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**From the Sainte Marie Foundation**

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## **Sainte Marie Wins Governor's Home Town Award**

SPRINGFIELD – On November 5, 2013, Governor Pat Quinn announced the winners of the 31st Annual Governor's Hometown Awards, which are presented annually to recognize volunteers for their work in improving their communities.

"The 2013 Governor's Home Town Awards honor the efforts of 22 remarkable groups who have selflessly dedicated their time and efforts to making their communities a better place to live," Governor Quinn said. "We applaud these groups of volunteers for improving the lives of others and truly making a difference in our state."

The village of Sainte Marie won a 2013 Governor's Home Town Award in the historical category for their 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration of June 2012. Judges' comments recognized the commitment that a very small village (pop. 250) made using all volunteers for a three-day celebration that drew thousands of visitors.

Village president Jack Thompson, his wife Marge, and Jason and Julie Warfel (Julie is president of the Ste. Marie Community Club that chaired the Quartoseptcentennial event) attended the awards ceremony in the Illinois Executive Mansion in Springfield. They were presented with a plaque and a road sign in recognition of their event's achievement.

"We want to extend our thanks to the Sainte Marie Foundation for their help in capturing this award," said Thompson. "And we also owe a debt of thanks to the Sainte Marie Community Club, many civic groups and clubs, all local merchants for the donations and financial support, and to all the volunteers from Sainte Marie and surrounding communities for their time and efforts. Also, many thanks to all former residents from all over the country who made the celebration such a success. This was quite an accomplishment for a village of less than 250 people."

This three-day event featured a 218-unit parade; a quilt show that exhibited 134 beautiful handmade treasures; a barbecued chicken dinner served to 1,600 guests; Sainte Marie's favorite sandwich, the pork burger, served to 5,000; and many gallons of homemade ice cream consumed by the hungry crowd. The Saturday event ended with an hour of glorious fireworks. On Sunday, a High Mass was celebrated by Bishop Thomas Paprocki, Springfield, followed by a gala reception. It's estimated that more than 7,000 people attended, proving that Sainte Marie is still a great little place to come home to and maybe even live in once again.

The Governor's Home Town Award recipients are selected by volunteer judges who review and rank applications based on a variety of factors, including local need, volunteer participation, use of resources and the results achieved. The projects are judged within their population categories as well as within their assigned project categories. The project categories include services and mentorship, beautification and sustainability, parks and recreation, memorials and monuments and history and historic preservation.

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) administers the Governor's Home Town Awards Program.

**Picture caption:** *Sainte Marie representatives accept the plaque and road sign at the Governor's Home Town Awards ceremony on Nov. 5 in the state capitol. (l-r) Jason and Julie Warfel, Emily Monk, Chief Operating Officer of the IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, Village President Jack Thompson and wife Marge.*

