

To whom this may concern:

It is our privilege to highly recommend Prairie Woodworks for McLean County's 2024 Chamber of Commerce Small Business Award.

Prairie Woodworks, located in the rural McLean County village of Downs, has continued to provide employment, as well as provide revenue for the tax base for the TriValley School District, for nearly half a century.

Having been founded in 1976, Prairie Woodworks – with a team of skilled artisans – provides custom heirloom quality craftsmanship for clients who place a value on historic restoration and for clients looking for unique quality furnishings meant to be handed down to future generations.

With the transfer of ownership from the original founders nearly 8 years ago, Ross Ambuehl (a 15 plus year employee at the time he purchased the business) has since led this small business successfully through many obstacles. Less than 18 months after taking ownership of the business from the founders, Ross's leadership was tested when an early morning fire broke out before the business opened for the day. A devastation such as this would have wiped out many businesses. However, through the leadership of Ross, as well as the dedication of the employees working together as a team for weeks and months, they were able to build back better and reestablish the artisan craft of building heirloom quality furnishings.

Ross's skill as a business owner and the dedication of his employees to both their craft and to one another as a tight-knit family of sorts sets this business apart from others. Ross's leadership and his ability to retain talented craftsmen has been a driving force in an environment where change has become the daily norm.

With a focus on their tradition of excellence, the skilled artisans at Prairie Woodworks take pride in the reputation they have established – both in McLean County, as well throughout the state of Illinois and beyond. Their artisan craftsmanship is on full display throughout our local area – making up much of the exhibits in the McLean County Museum – preserving our county's history.

On a personal level, having moved to McLean County over a decade ago, we have worked with Prairie Woodworks on a variety of projects – with them providing layout and design for the creation of custom furniture for the bedroom, office, entry, and living areas of our home, to full kitchen and bath remodeling. Through their detailed process of first sitting down with their clients before drafting their vision prior to any species of wood being cut, they offer top-tier professional attention while maintaining an intimate level of personalized service. As longstanding clients of Prairie Woodworks, we appreciate being the recipient of the dedication and passion each talented employee at Prairie Woodworks brings to their craft.

Sincerely,
Michael & Melanie Masching