

# MT. VERNON & REGION

## Lincoln statue expected to help tourism

BY APRIL TOLER

SENTINEL NEWS STAFF

**MT. VERNON** — The erection of a \$90,000 Abraham Lincoln statue will be more than just a tribute to the former president, Bonnie Jerdon, Director of Mt. Vernon Tourism said.

It will be an attraction that can help boost tourism in the area.

"History is a big part of what visitors like when they come to Mt. Vernon," Jerdon said.

The idea for a Lincoln statue, which will be erected on the grounds of the Appellate Courthouse, began during a Downtown Development Group discussion about the 200th birthday of Lincoln.

Jerdon said the group began discussing Lincoln's history in the King City and the importance of the Appellate Courthouse in Mt. Vernon.

"It's an icon both to intown people and one that visitors recognize," she said.

The Appellate Courthouse's history began in 1854 when the General Assembly appropriated \$6,000 for the building of a Supreme Courthouse for the first grand division in Mt. Vernon. The first unit was completed in 1857, according to the Illinois 2nd Judicial Circuit Court Web site.

Lincoln's connection stems from the State of Illinois vs. Illinois Central Railroad case heard by the Supreme Court in Mt. Vernon.

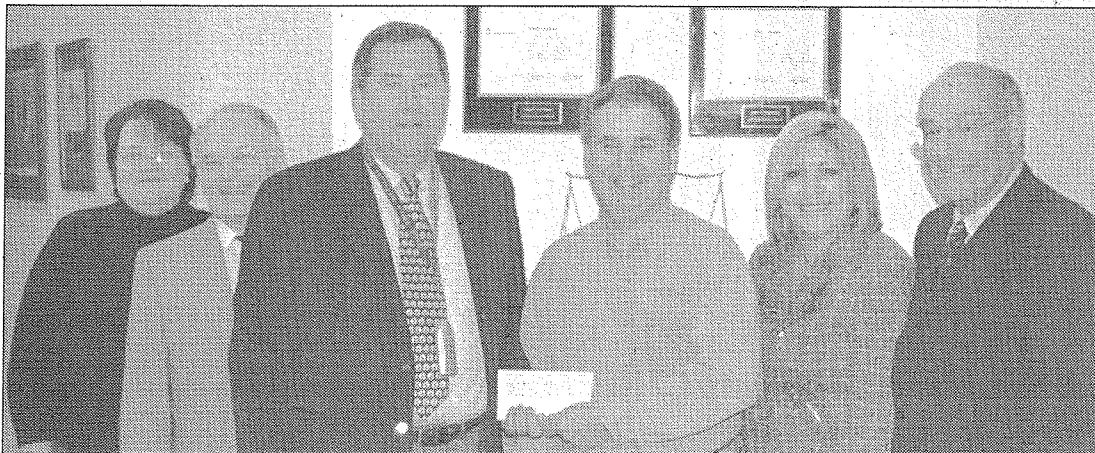
The case revolved around the question of evaluating the property of the railroad for the assessment of taxes.

Lincoln represented the railroad.

In 1870, appellate court districts were established and Mt. Vernon was selected as the site of the fourth district.

In 1964, the former fourth district, located in Mt. Vernon, became the fifth judicial district. Three counties were also added to the fifth district.

That history, along with the well-known case involving Lincoln is what makes the Appellate Courthouse, Jerdon said, such a rich part of the area's history.



Sentinel Photo/APRIL TOLER

The Sharp Law Firm donated \$5,000 for the Lincoln sculpture. Pictured FROM LEFT are Bonnie Jerdon, Lincoln sculpture committee, John Hundley, attorney with Sharp Law Firm, Terry Sharp, attorney, Ron Neibert, Lincoln sculpture committee, Beth McDonald, Lincoln sculpture committee, and Mark Hassakis, Lincoln sculpture committee.