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FOR RELEASE 10:00 A.M. CST, November 23, 2009:

**American Oak Preserving Company
Expansion Celebration Starke County, Indiana**

Starke County, Indiana – Thursday, December 3, 2009, will be another day of Celebration of Success in Starke County with the celebration of the expansion of American Oak Preserving Company in North Judson, Indiana. The public and dignitaries will gather for photographs at American Oak Preserving Company, 601 Mulberry Street, North Judson, Indiana at 11:00 a.m. CST. The Starke County Development Foundation is hosting the plant expansion celebration ceremonies.

American Oak Preserving Company specializes in the manufacturing and importing of home décor products, such as wreaths, bouquets, balls, bowls, potpourri, pine cones, dried flowers and vases. American Oak sells to national companies like Michaels, Target, Crate & Barrel, Pier 1, TJ Maxx, Bed Bath & Beyond and Wal-Mart.

American Oak has its International Headquarters in North Judson, Indiana, at which location it also manufactures products. It has a sister company in Canada selling to large Canadian retailers and a manufacturing facility in Mexico.

This year, American Oak has already imported more than 180 full sized shipping containers of products, of which 134 were delivered to North Judson. Their raw material is obtained from the United States, India, China, Italy, Brazil, Vietnam, Philippines, Kenya, Madagascar, Indonesian and Thailand.

American Oak began in North Judson in 1916 when Frederick Vorm and his son, Charley Vorm brought a process to the United States to preserve the oak leaves which were found in abundance in the Starke County area. The family tradition continues under the 4th generation leadership of Charlie Vorm, whose daughters, Alyse, Kirsten and Erika are all very involved in new design trends and are charged with overseas travel in the search for new materials.

The project saw the construction of 6,000 square feet of new showroom space and offices, as well as new office equipment to support the company's international business with a capital investment of approximately \$1,000,000.00 and the eventual creation of 14 new jobs.

"We have found that North Judson is a great place to do business and the town has been very supportive of us throughout the years," said Charlie Vorm, President and CEO, American Oak Preserving Co., Inc.

The Starke County Development Foundation assisted American Oak in obtaining incentives from the Town of North Judson and the Indiana Economic Development Corporation for this expansion.

The Starke County Development Foundation is a not-for-profit local economic development organization (LEDO) providing economic development opportunities on behalf of

Starke County, Indiana, the City of Knox, and the Towns of North Judson and Hamlet through the development of industrial parks, rail spurs, greenfield sites, shovel-ready sites, infrastructure and workforce development. For more information regarding Starke County Development Foundation, visit www.starkecounty.com.

As a result of legislation passed by the Indiana General Assembly in Feb. 2005, the Indiana Economic Development Corporation (IEDC) replaced the Department of Commerce as the premier entity charged with state economic development. The IEDC has a 12-member board chaired by Gov. Mitch Daniels. For more information about IEDC, please visit www.iadc.IN.gov.

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