

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE	FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:
May 19, 2016	Sue Nicholson
	Office-(318) 807-4015 Cell-(318) 614-2833

EIGHT BUSINESSES RECOGNIZED AT THOMAS H. SCOTT AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

MONROE, LA – Griffin Funeral Home, Acme Glass and Mirror, WellNecessities, Brookshire Grocery Company and IBM were honored with Thomas H. Scott Awards of Excellence during a reception held Thursday evening at the University of Louisiana at Monroe Conference Center. In addition, three businesses received special judge’s awards.



The selections came from forty seven nominations for the prestigious awards, which honor companies making significant contributions to the Ouachita Parish economy through capital improvements, expansion, job creation, and community involvement during 2015 and 2016. This year’s nominees collectively created or retained 763 jobs in Ouachita Parish and made capital investments of \$65.7 million.

Griffin Funeral Home won the award in the category for small businesses (less than 10 employees). Griffin Funeral Home is owned and operated by Kenneth Griffin. The business first opened

in 2009 in West Monroe with only two staff members and an investment of \$80,000. In 2012, they opened a location in Ball, Louisiana and Simply Cremations in Ouachita Parish. In 2015, Griffin invested \$900,000 to purchase a location in East Ouachita. In addition, he created five new jobs. This year, the company plans to invest another \$1.5 million to build a state of the art facility in West Ouachita to accommodate the rapid growth of their business. Griffin Funeral Home supports a host of organizations, including Toys for Tots, MDA, Chennault Aviation and Military Museum, the Council on Aging and a host of Veterans related organizations.

The winner of the medium business category (11-50 employees) was Acme Glass and Mirror, Inc. The business is a family owned full line glass company that opened in 1984 on Louisville Avenue in Monroe. John Cooper serves as President of the business. Acme Glass and Mirror installs, fabricates and distributes automobile glass, residential glass, and commercial glass products. In 1989, Cooper opened his second location in Ruston. That was followed by the construction of the facility on Louisville Avenue in Monroe and a new branch in West Monroe in 1995. In 2008, another branch was added in Bastrop. In August 2015, Acme Glass invested \$800,000 to build a new 7,500 square foot facility in West Monroe and added eight additional employees. The business is now run by Cooper and his sons. They support the chambers in Monroe, West Monroe, Ruston and Bastrop. They also support St. Jude's, local athletic groups, and the Louisiana Homebuilders Association.

Recognized as the large business winner (51 to 100 employees) was WellNecessities . The sleep diagnostic testing company first opened in Shreveport in 1993 by owner Lea Desmarteau. Over the years, her business grew to locations in Monroe, Ruston, Natchitoches, and Leesville. In 2001, WellNecessities partnered with their first HCA hospital in Austin, Texas to provide sleep and neurodiagnostic services. This led to more efficient delivery of services and improved patient outcomes. In Monroe, the program partnered with St. Francis initially. However, in 2016, the clinic invested \$95,000 to open a free standing sleep center in the heart of the medical community, just off Forsythe Avenue. The business supports Go Red for Women, Girls on the Run and Community Gardens.

The corporate business of the year award (Over 101 employees) was presented to Donnie Byars, Vice President District V for Brookshire Grocery Company. Brookshire's is a privately owned regional grocery chain based in Tyler, Texas with 151 supermarkets in three states-Texas, Louisiana and Arkansas and six distribution centers located in Texas and Louisiana. The company opened in 1928 with

the original store in Tyler. Currently in Ouachita Parish there are four Brookshire stores and two Super One stores along with the Distribution Center. This past year, Brookshire's invested \$18.2 million to upgrade and renovate their stores in Ouachita Parish. That included adding 10,000 square feet of store space to the facilities. Brookshire's employs 684 people in the greater Monroe area. The company proudly sponsors the United Way, ULM, the Northeast Louisiana Children's Museum and the American Red Cross.

The winner of the Thomas H. Scott Award was IBM Client Innovation Center. The award was accepted by Christine Bartlett, Center Leader for the IBM Monroe Client Innovation Center. With an investment of \$175,000, in 2015, IBM opened the Monroe Client Innovation Center, one of four such centers in North America and part of a global network of centers worldwide. IBM is a globally integrated technology and consulting company headquartered in Armonk, New York. Locally, IBM employs over 100 people. They join the nearly 400,000 IBM employees throughout the world. The IBM Center in Monroe has been working with ULM, Louisiana Tech University and Grambling State University to hire graduates as well as attracting professionals from throughout the U.S. By 2020, the Center plans to have over 400 employees at a new facility across from CenturyLink. While a relatively young business in Monroe, IBM wasted no time in getting involved in the community. They established STEM programs at area schools, gathered and donated food to the Food Bank of NE LA, provided volunteers to the United Way and assisted with recent flood relief efforts in Ouachita Parish.

The 2016 Thomas H. Scott Spirit of Community Award was presented to The Center for Children and Families. The center does a remarkable job protecting and assisting the children of Northeast Louisiana through the work of CASA and Therapeutic Services. In addition, they are exceptional advocates for children throughout the region.

The 2016 Thomas H. Scott Spirit of Excellence Award was presented to Bayou Dental Group. With an unparalleled commitment to excellence and professional development, Dr. David Finley, DDS, has grown his dental business from a storefront in Pecanland Mall with two employees to a state of the art facility on Tower Drive with a staff of ten employees.

The 2016 Thomas H. Scott Spirit of Caring Award was presented to Barbie Clark owner of Helping Hands Pediatric Day Health Center. The specialty health day-care facility serves medically

fragile children and provides a critical service to families in the community. The center, which is located on Washington Street in Monroe, employs fifteen people.

The twenty-three finalists in the small business (less than 10 employees) category were: A Bernard Company, Affinity Central Lab, Bayou Dental, Beauty on the Bayou, Beef Jerky Outlet, Bella Blues Designs Company, Bestz Donuts, Dot Dot's Boutique, Express Employment Professionals, For His Temple Family Foods, Griffin Funeral Home, JAG Glass, LLC., Meineke Car Center of Monroe, N.Y.C. Canine Styling, New Health Chiropractic, LLC, Ovation Women's Wellness, Party Time, Pelican State Clothing, Power Cleaning Company, Raven Salon and Spa, The Diamond Parlour, Tropical Tan and Boutique and WOD-RX Elite Gear.

The fifteen finalists in the medium business (between 11-50 employees) category were: Acme Glass and Mirror, The Affinity Health Management Center, Century21 United, Complete Cardiovascular Center of Monroe, Dairy Queen Grill and Chill of Monroe, Family Eye Care, First National Bank, Guaranty Bank and Trust, Guidry's Uniforms, Helping Hands Pediatric Day Health Center, Home Hardware Center, Homeland Bank, Painting with a Twist, Planet Fitness and Subway.

In the large business (51-100 employees) category, the two nominees were: The Center for Children and Families and WellNecessities.

The seven nominees for the Corporate category (over 100 employees) were: Brookshire Grocery Company, Coast Professional, Inc., Ft. Miro Foods, LLC (Newk's), IBM, St. Francis Medical Center, Texas Roadhouse and University Health-Conway.

The Thomas H. Scott Awards of Excellence Reception is hosted by the Monroe Chamber of Commerce, the University of Louisiana at Monroe's College of Business and The News-Star. Presenting sponsor for the event is Scott Powerline and Utility Equipment, LLC. Additional sponsors for the reception are: All Star Trophies and Awards, ANGUS Chemical, Car Town, Cross Keys Bank, Heard, McElroy & Vestal, LLC, IberiaBank, KTVE/KARD, Lagniappe Broadcasting, Patty Stewart Photography, Progressive Bank, P & S Surgical Hospital, Specialty Management Services of Ouachita, Strauss Interests, The News-Star, The ULM College of Business, the City of Monroe and the Radio People.