



Stephen Haas/The News-Gazette

This year's event is expected to feature 35 hot-air balloons.

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## BALLOONS OVER VERMILION

# Tribute includes flyover, anthems

By **PAUL WOOD**

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DANVILLE — Balloons Over Vermilion will honor its biggest benefactor Friday and Saturday.

The annual hot-air balloon festival will dedicate the national anthem to Julius W. Hegeler II each of the nights at the Vermilion Regional Airport — as well as a flyover Friday.

Balloons Over Vermilion Co-Chairman Pat O'Shaughnessy said the festival, which replaced the Oldsmobile Balloon Classic after a several-year hiatus, would not have been possible without Mr. Hegeler, who died Friday. He was 91.

"He made a five-year commitment of \$100,000, and this is the fourth year," O'Shaughnessy said. "He's done a lot for kids, too, and they'll be honoring him."

Mr. Hegeler was a role model for an area that extended beyond Danville.

"It was huge jumpstart for him to get others involved. People follow leaders," he said.

A T-6 Texan single-engine advanced trainer aircraft dedicated to Mr. Hegeler, himself a pilot, will fly over the festival about 5:45 p.m. Friday, O'Shaughnessy said.