

War memorial dedication highlights EAA Fly-In

Boy Scout Andrew Dreas takes on project for Eagle Scout rank

BY RICK HAYES
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Dedication of the Jefferson County Heroes Memorial will be one of the highlights of the 15th annual Experimental Aircraft Association Fly-In on Oct. 15 at the Mt. Vernon Airport during the Southern Illinois Harvest Festival.

The memorial, once located at the AMVETS Hall on Main Street, is being completely renovated with Boy Scout Andrew Dreas of Woodlawn Boy Scout Troop 102 being named the project manager. Dreas took on the project for passage in becoming an Eagle scout — the highest rank in Boy Scouts.

“When the AMVETS moved, the membership voted to approach our Hall of Honor committee here at the airport to see if it could be updated with modern technology and as an extension to our Hall of Honor,” explained Airport Manager Chris Collins. “The Hall of Honor Committee then searched for a project manager and Andrew agreed to take it on as a scouting project,” he added.

Dreas, along with airport offi-

cial, have conducted several fundraisers during the summer months to help pay for the project, estimated to cost about \$8,000.

“He and a few of us have been working on this all summer to make it a reality,” Collins said. “We’ll be having a very special dedication ceremony.” The dedication will take place at 11 a.m.

Small signs will be placed on each side of the memorial, containing the names of the people or entities who helped construct the memorial. Various levels of partnership are also available.

The memorial was designed by Mt. Vernon architect Brian Edmison. The new design will feature a steel frame, 2011 sign panels and graphics, advanced lighting, patio pavers and landscaping.

In addition to the dedication, free Young Eagle rides will be available for children, ages 8 to 17. Approximately 3,000 kids have flown over the skies of Mt. Vernon in the previous 14 years of the EAA Fly-In.

“It’s the pilots and aviators’ way to give back and to let the kids aim a little higher,” Collins explained. “You never know how this may turn a kid around, to help them make better grades in school or aspire to something higher while giving them a new look at the world.”

Participants must have their parents sign permission slips in order to board the planes.

Collins said he is still organizing war birds to display during the event.

“Right now, I’ve got a couple of North American T-6 advance



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WARBIRD AT AIRPORT — Several spectators were drawn to this Boeing B-17 Flying Fortress during a recent EAA Fly-In at the Mt. Vernon Airport.

trainers, and the on-board delivery Cod from the Navy,” Collins said, adding that he is working on getting commitments from other participants.

“It also looks like we’ll have another antique tractor show sponsored by the Jefferson County Antique Iron Club,” Collins said.

Collins said the antique tractors have been shown in past shows, but the level of participation for this year’s event is likely to be much higher.

Collins said he is also working on getting some re-enactment displays, much like the World War II kitchen that was featured at last year’s event.

“There will be plenty for people to see, but we’re really focusing on the war memorial dedication. There were hundreds of men and women who gave their lives in battle. They’re our friends and relatives who gave the ultimate sacrifice,” Collins said.

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NATIONAL GUARD DEMONSTRATION



Submitted Photos

One of the activities at the 2010 Southern Illinois Harvest Festival involved a National Guard demonstration. In the PHOTOS ABOVE, festival attendees visit with the guardsmen on duty and check out the display.