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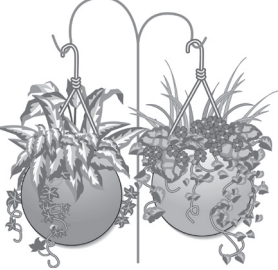
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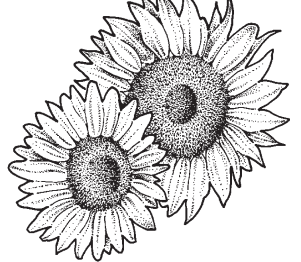
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Helping honor Western Kansas Veterans who served in WWII



Kansas WWII Veterans made an Honor Flight to Washington in April, and the Southwest Kansas group wants to make another trip to Washington in October if the money can be raised.

Honor Flight raises money to fly veterans to Washington

Nearly 1000 World War II veterans die every day in the United States.

For that reason Honor Flights were created.

The inaugural Honor Flight took place in May of 2005. Six small planes flew out of Springfield, Ohio taking 12 World War II veterans on a visit to the memorial in Washington, DC.

In August of 2005, an ever-expanding waiting list of veterans led our transition to commercial airline carriers with the goal of accommodating as many veterans as possible. Partnering with HonorAir in Hendersonville, N. C., the group formed the “Honor Flight Network.” Today, the group continues working aggressively to expand the program to other cities across the nation.

Central Prairie Honor Flight, a branch of national Honor Flight Network and based in Great Bend, has flown 834 WWII-era veterans on 10 flights to Washington D.C. at no cost to the veteran, said Mark Rine, an area coordinator of Tribune.

The organization began taking vets from Southwest Kansas in 2008 and several area

veterans have made the journey, Rine said, but they were required to drive to either Denver or Kansas City airports in order to catch a plane

The Southwest Kansas sub-committee has started a project to charter a plane to carry about 170 West Kansas Veterans directly from Garden City to Washington D.C.

However to do this the group needs to raise \$80,000 to \$100,000 in a short amount of time. The goal is to have a flight in the latter part of October.

Individuals and private organizations pay for the approximate \$650 per veteran through donations and fund raising events. No money is accepted from the veteran.

On September 11, starting at 4 p.m., the Southwest Kansas Honor Flight committee will host a banquet at the Garden City Veterans of Foreign Wars. A dinner, auctions and entertainment is planned. Tickets will cost \$25 and all proceeds will go toward flying these Heroes to Washington.

An area coordinator, Mark Rine, of Tribune has been involved with Honor Flight for the past year and a half.

“I was made aware of the program through an article just as this one, and over time the community of Tribune and Greeley County has flown 15 veterans to see the memorials. These men and women are not going to be around much longer and I feel this is a great way to honor them for the service and sacrifice they’ve made. We have nearly 175 veterans in Western Kansas on the waiting list to go.”

Southwest Kansas is in need of volunteers to assist in this project. We are in need of donations, coordinators in each county and groups to take up the challenge to get these folks on a flight.

More information can be obtained by contacting: Central Prairie Honor Flights, 1817 16th St., Great Bend, KS 67530, Phone: (620) 792-6224, FAX: (620) 792-4875, www.centralprairiehonorflights.org

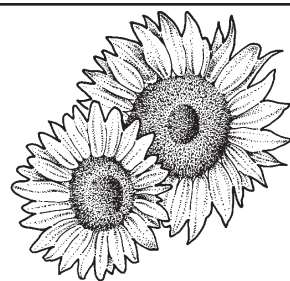
Veterans from Sherman County and those from Thomas County have been among those making Honor Flight trips to Washington.



View of the World War II Memorial in Washington with Washington Monument in background.
Photo by Rick Latoff / American Battle Monuments Commission



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