

(For November 2018)

## Around the City . . . . with City Manager David Thayer

Thanks to the citizens in our community, in 1945, the City dedicated the Iron River Honor Roll Park that houses the Veterans Memorial. Pastor C. J. Tolf built the stone monument. Area students assembled the names to the placards in his church. Local businesses donated money, and area families donated a dollar to have their family member's name added to placards that honored those veterans that serve in World War I and World War II. The cost of the project was \$3,500.

Improvements were made to the park in 1985 and 2009. All in all, the monument has stood the test of time. Over the past 73 years, the names had deteriorated to the point that they were barely readable. There was limited work in the past to revive some of the names.

Since 2009, the West Side Veterans Memorial Association have maintained the park. In 2013, they realized it was time to have a full restoration of the monument and put in motion efforts to achieve that goal. The plan, then and remains today, is to restore the memorial with the existing 1570 names. They compiled a list of those names on the monument and verified their correct spelling and accuracy by researching old copies of the Iron County Reporter. The paper printed the names that families paid the dollar to have added to the memorial. The Association reached out to a company in Eau Claire, Wisconsin to ascertain an estimate of cost and for help moving forward. The estimate was staggering and placed the project on hold until a way could be figured out how to raise the necessary funds.

This last September, the Association's President, Ron Zeller, approached the City to see if we could fund this project. The City, still struggling to recover from the depression of 2008 and downsizing of our tax base, does not have necessary disposal cash on hand to pay for the

project. However, the City did pledge to help find the required funds going forward. The City agreed to handle the administrative tasks, to hold the funds in trust, and act as trustee for any disbursements.

I did reach out to Lifetime Memorials, of Eau Claire, to get a current quote for the cost to restore the names on the Monument. We have now negotiated a cost of \$37,785 to have the names sandblasted on five Jet Black Granite panels. The engraving will take about 90 to 120 days. Before they can purchase the granite and begin, they need a deposit of \$20,000. Site preparation and monument restoration, including some stone tuck pointing and application of a sealant, will cost about \$3,000.

Our area Veterans Associations are taking the lead in organizing a community fundraising campaign with a targeted goal of \$40,000. Contributions can be made to the American Legion, VFW, West Side Veterans Council, AmVets, West Side Veteran's Memorial Association, or directly to the City of Iron River. Please designate your donation for the memorial. Your donation is tax deductible. Cannisters will be placed in our Posts and other locations around the city.

The group has set a dedication date for the revealing of the restoration project for Memorial Day, 2019. To make that date, given the preparation days involved, we need to send the deposit to Lifetime by December 15, 2018.

Our community has raised to occasion in the past when the rodeo was saved. I trust we will do so again with this project. Once the restoration is completed, the monument will continue to honor those that have served for another hundred years.

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