

# **Veterans Memorial Park of Northeast Michigan**

## **2007 ANNUAL REPORT**

**April 1, 2008**

Following the Groundbreaking Ceremony and official establishment of the Park on Veterans Day November 11, 2006, planning and organization of activities for 2007 and beyond were contemplated. Long range planning for substantial completion of the Park within a 10 year period is an ongoing effort. The goal, however, is that notable improvements will be undertaken and accomplished on an annual basis.

It was determined that the primary focus, work effort, and expenditure for 2007 would be the remodeling of both the exterior and interior of the building now known as the Visitors Center. This building had been unused and not maintained for more than 12 years, and both the interior and exterior were in very poor condition. The building was actually scheduled for demolition at the same time the operating agreement between Oscoda Township and the Park Corporation was finalized in September 2006.

A plan was developed, and a professional builder was retained to accomplish the Visitors Center improvement goals. The builder, Huron Bay Construction located in Harrisville, has donated substantial amounts of advisory and project labor time, in addition to providing materials 'at cost' for the benefit of the Park, working primarily on the Visitors Center.

Exterior work, which consisted of removal and disposal of the old z-brick and extensive preparation of the remaining surfaces was accomplished by coordinated volunteer and contractor work sessions in April. Thereafter, window, door and corner trim were installed followed by the application and finishing of a very durable sprayed concrete compound. Several coats of primer and finish paint completed the exterior work.

Interior work to the Visitors Center has consisted of extensive cleanup, repair of damaged walls and woodwork, repair and replacement of plumbing fixtures, and repair/upgrade of electrical fixtures.

All exterior remodeling work and basic interior cleanup and repairs were completed prior to the Visitors Center Dedication and Memorial Day Ceremony on May 28, 2007. More than 124 supporters attended that event which included a brief program with an Honor Guard and flag raising.

Later in 2007, work began on the installation of a Reception Counter which includes storage cabinets and drawers. The countertop itself is a very high quality and substantial poured concrete/aggregate type. The counter project is finished with the exception of final polishing and sealing of the aggregate top, which will be completed prior to the 2008 season. .

This winter, repair and decoration of interior walls was ongoing with the installation of pictures and the start of work for very attractive Branch of Service patch displays for the 5 Armed Services.

The total value of the interior and exterior improvements made to the Visitors Center thus far, which includes materials and paid and volunteer labor, exceeds **\$18,700.00**

Three cleanup and grounds improvement work days occurred, and included sidewalk edging, pruning of trees and shrubbery, removal of 2 dead trees, flower planting, raking and trash pickup, and simple landscaping improvements. A total of 235 volunteer man hours were expended to accomplish this work.

Attractive posts were installed and finished at each end of the Visitors Center parking lot from which decorative 'OPEN' and 'WELCOME' Flags are flown during the hours of operation of the Visitors Center. A schedule for days and hours of operation for the Visitors Center in 2008 was established and published.

The second annual 'Friends of the Park' fundraising dinner was held on November 10, 2007. United States Representative Bart Stupak, and TSgt Mark DeCorte, U. S. Air Force representing the "Why We Serve" speakers program were honored guests and speakers. More than 110 attendees enjoyed dinner, live entertainment, live and silent auctions, and supporter

fellowship for those interested in the Park. Many businesses and individuals from the area donated auction items, and the event was sponsored by Cooper Standard Industries.

The Park website was established in April 2007 and is being improved and providing updated information on a continuous basis. The website address is [www.vmpnem.org](http://www.vmpnem.org).

In December, a professional Landscape Architect, Mark Robinson and Associates were retained to produce a complete Master Plan, including development drawings for the entire 6 acre site. Mr. Robinson, whose business is located in Harbor Springs, is graciously donating his time to the Park to provide his expertise in architectural design and planning services.

The completion of these drawings will allow further planning and prioritizing of specific projects, and the creation of construction drawings, funding confirmation, and groundbreaking for the first memorial structure. These documents will also be critical to provide concise information about development plans to the general public and potential contributors to the Park.

Fundraising has been very successful from a local standpoint, and has allowed us to make initial improvements and have funds available to make minor purchases and initiate more improvements in 2008.

The ultimate goal of the Board of Directors is to continually develop and make improvements to the Park which will have a cumulative value in excess of \$500,000 over the course of the next 9 years.

The Board would like to recognize and express our deep appreciation to the many individuals, businesses, and organizations that have contributed time, money, and other assets to our cause. Many others have pledged to do so in the future as specific projects and other needs are initiated.

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## **Veterans Memorial Park of Northeast Michigan 2008 Goals, Objectives, and Events**

1. Final conceptual design of the Park's Master Plan followed by production of development drawings, thereafter construction blueprints produced for the initial memorial construction project.
2. Upgrade and reconfiguration of the brick structure which formally served as the WAFB entrance sign in order to utilize both sides to allow the application of very high quality and attractive signage including lighting designating 'Veterans Memorial Park of Northeast Michigan'.
3. Final design, production of construction blueprints, and initial funding confirmation for pentagon design Memorial Walls. It's anticipated that the groundbreaking for this substantial structure will occur on Memorial Day 2009.
4. Coordination with Consumers Power to accomplish the removal of all the very old and now unnecessary large electric poles, transformers and wires. Following that, the establishment of new and modern electrical service feed line to the property line at the north end of the park. There will be no overhead wires in the Park.
5. Additional remodeling, improvement and display and decoration establishment inside the Visitors Center will be completed.
6. Installation of a high quality cast metal "Visitors Center" plaque on the front side of the building with large letters visible from Skeel Avenue. The damaged thermo pane front window will also be removed and replaced.
7. Permitting, drilling, and testing of Irrigation Well and installation of the Well Pump sized to irrigate the entire 6 + acre Park. The actual irrigation distribution system will be installed in subsequent years.
8. A 6'X 8' concrete pad will be installed at the rear utility room door of Visitors Center. The raised brick/concrete structure at the front of Section II will have cracks repaired and be re-faced on the outside walls.

9. Planting of landscape shrubbery around Visitors Center and the initial establishment of several perennial flower beds. Pruning, fertilizing, and mulching of existing shrubbery and decorative trees will be performed.

10. The location will be determined for the installation of 5 quality 20' flagpoles from which the Branch of Service flags will be flown during the Memorial Day through Labor Day season. The actual installation of these poles may be delayed as final modifications to the Master Plan are made.

11. Cleaning, crack filling, and miscellaneous repairs of the existing concrete will be completed throughout Sections I and II. Weed growth will be controlled on concrete and asphalt surfaces.

12. Repair or replacement of the concrete benches at the center of the Circle of Flags, and acquisition and placement of 2 more quality benches in Section I will be completed.

## **Events**

Monday May 26<sup>th</sup> 2008 Memorial Day

Raising of the United States Flag from half to full staff about at 2 PM. No official ceremony at the Park. This year, the new State Flags will be raised for the season prior to Memorial Day, on May 8<sup>th</sup>, in conjunction with the dedication of the new 747-800 Hanger.

Saturday July 19<sup>th</sup> 2008 8 AM to 8 PM 'True Colors Classic'

It is expected that this will be an annual community family event to provide entertainment, exhibits, raise awareness of the Park, and take advantage of fundraising opportunities. Both entertainment and car and motorcycle show flyers will be distributed beginning in May and June, and a more detailed Schedule of Events will be published in late June as additional events, exhibits, and participants are determined.

Saturday November 8, 2008

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Friends of the Park Dinner will be held on Saturday November 8 beginning at 6 PM the Oscoda American Legion Hall.