

St. Clair Raises \$4,100 From Banners Honoring Veterans

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St. Clair City Inspector Mike Bursey stands next to one of two light poles displaying the names of 37 veterans. People pay \$100 to have the name of an active duty, retired or deceased military member displayed for a year. Money raised goes toward a planned veterans memorial.

Missourian Photo/Geoff Folsom

St. Clair's Honor a Veteran program is off to a strong start.

Since the program began last month, the city has sold 41 banners featuring the name of a current or former veteran, with another four in the works, said City Inspector Mike Bursey. The banners are being placed two per row on two light poles along North Commercial Avenue in front of city hall.

One of the light poles already is more than halfway full, while the other has several banners. The banners, which cost \$100 each, have raised \$4,100, which is expected to help pay for a veterans memorial in the city. Bursey said the memorial will be ready for Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

“A lot of the older generation is passing and not even being recognized,” Bursey said. “A lot of people don’t want to talk about it, but I think we should recognize our past.”

The banners also include the branch of the service and any war where the veterans served and medals they received.

Banners have been purchased for veterans outside St. Clair, including from Union and Sullivan.

“It’s not specifically for St. Clair,” Bursey said. “It’s just that St. Clair wants to honor our veterans.”

The two light poles can hold up to 80 banners, which will be displayed through Sept. 30, 2021. If more than 80 are purchased, a pole on Paul Parks Drive will be used.

The city also is considering placing benches beneath the banners, giving people a place to reflect and take photos with the banners.

The project also is designed to allow people who were veterans to share their stories, Bursey said.

“I think too many times we see veterans pass, and we never even knew they were a veteran,” he said. “That’s what I’m trying to change ... to identify and give everybody a shout-out for what they did for our country.”

“I’m hoping this will bring light and help them open up about what they did,” said Kim Miller, administrative assistant in the building department. “And know that they are appreciated.”

The banners did have a small setback when high winds broke a zip tie and blew some of them out of place. Bursey said the city reinforced them with metal zip ties.