

Collegedale to donate for park construction

BY WILL MORRIS
STAFF WRITER

Collegedale officials today will donate \$100,000 to help with the construction a local park dedicated to veterans.

City Manager Carol Mason said the money came from a half-cent sales tax designed to help the city fund special projects.

"This is going to be a huge asset to the community," Ms. Mason said.

Phil Garver, an Army medic in the Vietnam War, helped put Veterans Memorial Park together.

"We cannot allow (children) to forget the sacrifices and commitment that the men and women of our armed forces have provided," he said.

Occupying a wide plaza near City Hall, the memorial consists of state flags, the U.S. flag, the prisoner of war flag, a Vietnam-era helicopter on a platform and a bronze statue of a World War II veteran.

Mr. Garver said plans to develop a memorial park started three years ago with an idea and a grocery bag.

"I drew some plans on a grocery bag, brought it to the council and that's how it all got started," he said.

Soon after his presentation a group of citizens set up a non-profit organization, drew up more formal renderings, found a location and started raising money, Mr. Garver said.



STAFF GRAPHIC BY LAURA E. WALKER

"Every dime (raised) has gone into the project," Mr. Garver said. "We're well over a quarter of a million dollars on the project and we have about \$300,000 more to spend."

The park foundation is selling bricks to place in the plaza. The bricks can be engraved to memorialize someone and are crucial in the foundation's efforts to raise more money, Mr. Garver said.

The foundation also expects to see another donation from the city at the beginning of next fiscal year in July. At the past City Commission meeting, city officials agreed to match donations to the park.

"Every dollar we raise they will match it up to another \$100,000," Mr. Garver said.

He said the park should be completed this October.

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