

COEUR D'ALENE TRIBE

NEWS RELEASE

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To: All reporters and editors
For story info: Marc Stewart 582-3891 (cell), 686-2023 (office).

TRIBE VETERANS MEMORIAL PLAZA PLANNED

PLUMMER – The Coeur d'Alene Tribe is building a memorial to honor its warriors who have fought for their homeland and country.

The memorial will be constructed at the Trailhead of the Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes, which is located at the north end of Plummer. The project is expected to be completed in May or early June.

“The Coeur d'Alenes have a proud tradition of serving our country,” said Coeur d'Alene Tribe Chairman Chief Allan. “We’ve always been the first to stand up and defend our country, which is why we’re happy to build this memorial to honor our veterans.”

The trailhead’s current design includes wooden columns. Those will be replaced with two eight foot high granite columns with an interpretation of the Steptoe Battle and a life size statue of a tribal warrior riding upon a horse. Also, there will be several features including the names of fallen Coeur d'Alene Tribal members.

Coeur d'Alene Tribe Vice Chairman Ernie Stensgar, a decorated Vietnam veteran, said he’s excited about seeing the project finished.

“It’s going to be awesome,” Stensgar said. “The memorial will be a special place for people to come and honor those who served and gave their life for the Coeur d’Alene Tribe and country. I am hoping it will be a place of reflection.”

The Tribe has a partial list of Coeur d’Alene tribal members who have served in the armed forces. To date, the Tribe has identified nearly a hundred individuals who fought and died in battles and wars. Currently, there are about five tribal members serving in the U.S. military.

“We should remember our warriors and the sacrifices they’ve made,” said Stensgar. “Our people have always protected our homeland land. They’re still doing that today.”

A search is underway to identify any other Coeur d’Alene tribal members who have served in the military – living or deceased. To have a family member considered for placement on the memorial please contact by mail the Coeur d’Alene Tribe Veterans Program, PO Box 408, Plummer, ID 83851 or by phone at (800) 829-2202 or (208) 686-5602.

The genesis of the project came from tribal members, veterans, and the Tribe’s Cultural Resource Department. A group of architecture and landscape architecture students from Iowa State University worked to develop conceptual designs and plans. Those ideas were blended with ideas from the Tribe’s Veteran Committee and local artists.

Stensgar said the Indians have the highest rate of service per capita compared to other minority groups.

“There are about 190,000 Native American veterans in this country,” said Stensgar. “When you see a soldier, they hold all of the characteristics you would want: courage, compassion, honor and experience.”

The Tribe is developing a park that will surround the memorial. The trailhead has been undergoing improvements over the last several years.