



DoT Gives Grant for the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial

The District of Columbia has recently been awarded \$6 million under the Public Lands Highway Discretionary grant program to make changes to city streets surrounding the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial site. The grant completes the federal funding required for the second phase and clears the way for the Memorial's construction to begin.

Arthur H. Wilson, president of the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation, hailed the announcement as "removing the last hurdle we needed to clear on this long road to establishing a national memorial to remember and honor all of America's disabled veterans. We are grateful for all of the support we have received on this journey and proud that one day soon there will be a memorial recognizing the sacrifices made to protect the many in our great

nation and throughout the world.

"The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial has enjoyed broad bipartisan support in Congress over the years, and we particularly want to acknowledge the tremendous efforts put forth by Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Patty Murray (D-WA), House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee Chairman Tom Latham (R-IA) and many others from both sides of the aisle in both chambers," Wilson said.

"We are also extremely grateful to Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, his senior leadership team and Federal Highway Administrator Victor Mendez for their personal dedication and commitment to the memorial that resulted in this grant award," he said. "In addition, Mayor Vincent Gray and his

team in the District of Columbia have committed to expediting this street work in order to prevent unnecessary delays for the memorial's construction." With just a single utility relocation issue remaining to be resolved, we anticipate that on-site construction of the memorial will begin next year and be completed and dedicated in early 2014. Many of the components of the memorial, however, are already under construction.

The Memorial Takes Shape

Cloud Gehshan Associates joined the project to "determine how best to tell the veterans' stories in a meaningful way," said Jerome Cloud, principal in charge of design for the company in Philadelphia.

After much research on disabled veterans' stories, the design team

created a quotation matrix of 700 stories to ensure a wide diversity of voices. The chosen 18 quotations were selected for universal resonance and timelessness.

These quotations will be etched onto 48 glass panels alongside historic photographic images and four bronze sculptured silhouettes. The images and quotations embedded in the glass will be illuminated by the light passing through the bronze cutouts during the day and lit up at night, said Cloud.

Drawing on more than 40 years of experience, Savoy Studios began work on the glass panels this summer. Each panel has five layers of glass, is four inches thick and weighs approximately 1,700 pounds.

The quotations and photographs are being etched into oversize 48-by-103-inch panels, which will form three walls at the site. Pittsburgh-based PPG Industries provided the sheets of three-quarter inch Starphire® glass, which is also used in the Apache helicopter, B-2 bomber and a new mine-resistant personnel vehicle.

At the heart of the memorial will be a ceremonial flame to honor the sacrifices of the nation's brave soldiers. While the flame itself is a simple concept, the technology behind it incorporates highly sophisticated control features, according to Monty Lunde, president and CEO of Technifex, the Valencia,

Calif., company that is designing, engineering and fabricating the stainless steel framework and electronically controlled flame system. Technifex successfully couples imagination with complex engineering for this timeless piece.

As the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial prepares for on-site construction, on the other side of the country in the Walla Walla Foundry in southeastern Washington state, sculptor Larry Kirkland is working with his team of artisans to give shape to four large bronze silhouette sculptures.

Kirkland is meticulously crafting these icons through lost-wax casting, a practice that has been used by artists for thousands of years. The process involves a number of steps, from model- and mold-making, to a variety of techniques for applying the bronze, before the bronze is poured into the wax mold. Once all the wax molds have been completed, he will cast them in bronze, apply the patina coat and seal them for posterity.

All combined, these design elements compare and contrast the ideals — and realities — of the journey taken by all disabled veterans. ■



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