

FALLEN



Photos by Daniel Mears / The Detroit News

The Michigan Fallen Heroes Memorial will be unveiled Nov. 21 at the Oakland County government complex.

Heroes side by side in life and in death

Memorial in Pontiac honors state police officers, firefighters who have died in line of duty since 1864.

By Mike Martindale
The Detroit News

PONTIAC — Workers are putting the final touches on a memorial to honor Michigan's police officers and firefighters who have died in the line of duty.

The Michigan Fallen Heroes Memorial — which includes a life-size bronze statue of a police officer and firefighter kneeling side by side before a wall listing those who have died — will be unveiled at 1 p.m. Nov. 21 at its new location on the east side of north Telegraph in the Oakland County government complex.

A smaller memorial site was dedicated elsewhere in the complex in 2002.

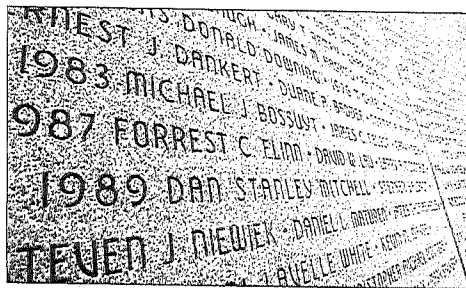
When it's completed, a 33-foot wide granite wall will display nearly 800 names of police officers and firefighters who died on the job in Michigan in the last 141 years. The project is the brainchild of Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard, who raised more than \$300,000 to recognize the ultimate sacrifice given by public employees.

"It bothered me that we didn't have a statewide memorial, and after September 11 it reminded me how police and fire serve side by side and unfortunately, often die side by side," Bouchard said.

The terrorist attacks in New York in 2001 claimed the lives of 343 firefighters and 23 police officers.

Several companies donated services for the project or provided them at a discount, including Harley Ellis architectural firm of Southfield, Lorenzo Construction Co. of Hartland, Elite Landscaping of Clarkston, Levy Co., a Clawson concrete company, and Construction Management Services of Highland.

A guitar, signed by entertainers Bob Seger and Kid Rock, among others, soon will be auctioned off on eBay to raise money for a maintenance fund for the memorial. Bouchard's aide, Amanda



The memorial will consist of 10 panels engraved with the names of nearly 800 police officers and firefighters who have died in Michigan since 1864.

MORE ONLINE

For a complete list of the 761 names that will appear on the Fallen Heroes Memorial, please visit detnews.com/oakland.

For information or to donate to the memorial, write Michigan Fallen Heroes Memorial, 1201 N. Telegraph Road, Pontiac, MI 48341; call (248) 858-1947; or e-mail MichiganFallenHeroes@yahoo.com.

For 1, said invitations to the dedication ceremony went to more than 2,500 Michigan lawmakers, police and fire officials and families of those who will be listed on the wall.

"We're hoping ... a good response that day and expect this site will become a place where other memorials, including to our war veterans, can take place every year," Ford said.

Sue Turcotte's father, Floyd Patz, was a Menominee-Ingallston firefighter who died while battling a forest fire in 1976. She and her husband will attend the ceremony with her daughter who lives in Plymouth.

"I'm really looking forward to it," she said, adding that her father died at age

46 leaving behind a wife and nine children. "But something like this is a fitting way to honor the men and women who have put their lives on the line for the rest of us — and a great honor for them and their relatives."

The granite Lost Heroes Wall will consist of 10 panels — each of them 7½ feet tall, three feet wide and a foot thick — engraved with names of those who have died in Michigan since 1864.

Julie Dearing-Manning and friends raised \$13,000 for the wall. Her first husband, Auburn Hills firefighter Dennis Dearing, Jr. died in a 1994 fire in the city.

She has since remarried and her second husband, James Manning, is an Auburn Hills police officer.

She was six weeks pregnant with her oldest child, Tyler, when her husband died.

"He's 11 years old and I plan to talk to him about the ceremony and may pull him out of school that day if he chooses to attend," she said.

"I think it's important. This is something we have all waited to happen."

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