

Car show and open house open eyes



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NEWARK - The Licking County Veteran's Memorial and Education Center held its annual car show Saturday, kicking off Veterans week with an open house of the center.

While the cars gathered crowds outside, visitors were invited to check out the education center to see what progress had been made and what work still needed done to complete the project.

"This is an effort to show the community what we have been able to do so far and to try and draw in more volunteers," Blaney said.

Gary Wimer, president of the museum's board, said the memorial and education center means a lot to him after serving in Vietnam during the war, indicating the center's wall of names of fallen servicemen it is working to complete and install.

"These were guys from my time, they'd be close to my age if they were still alive," he said, pointing at the men who had died either in Vietnam or after returning to the U.S. Four members of the service from Heath died in Vietnam, and Wimer said they were a close-knit community, so remembering them and teaching the community about everything the veterans did is important to him.

"I'm also hoping that once the center is finished, we can become a source of outreach for any returning servicemen who don't want to go to (Veterans Affairs) or that slip through the cracks and just need someone to open up to," he said. "Those are my two goals for this center."

The Licking County Library displayed a portion of their "In the Company of Heroes: Licking County Veterans" project, lead by Doug Stout.

"This is an online database of every veteran from Licking County," said Stout. He collects information about the veterans then submits them so people can have access to names and faces of local service men and women. He added the 620th entry on Friday.

"Surprisingly, the further back online that you go, the more information about veterans there is to find," Stout said. "It's a little more difficult to track down information for more recent servicemen."

Blaney said that for all the progress that the center has made, it still needs time, money and volunteers to reach its ultimate goal.

"We're planning on installing a wall with names of all the veterans from Licking County outside of the center," he said. "But we also want to have a building that goes along with the wall, one that will offer more information for visitors."