

Weather

Monday, Aug. 16

Partly cloudy. Highs in the lower 80s. Lows in the upper 60s.



Alex Anarat
Marshall Elementary
School

This week

TUESDAY

Mostly sunny. Highs in the lower 80s. Lows in the upper 60s.



Occoquan builds legacy, one brick at a time

By ALIEN M. STRENG
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The bicentennial efforts of the town of Occoquan and its historic organization got a big boost this week from area war veterans.

Town leaders hope others will join in. VFW Post 7916 of Occoquan donated \$1,000 to Historic Occoquan Inc. to help pay for the organization's logo to be etched into the brick pathway leading to the town hall.

As part of its yearlong bicentennial celebration, the town has initiated a "Buy a Brick" program. For \$100 a brick, contributors can purchase a brick and have it inscribed with as many as 15 characters on two lines. Many choose to memorialize loved ones.

"We've gotten a positive response from the people in the town. Some of the older residents have bought bricks for their entire families," said Leo Smith, Occoquan Town Councilman and chairman of the Occoquan Bicentennial Committee.

For \$1,500, the price of 15 bricks, organizations can have their logos etched on.

Historic Occoquan, while supportive of all of the town's efforts to acknowledge its past, has limited funds and would not have been able to come up with the entire \$1,500 on its own, said its president Martha

Roberts. "We rely on donations," she said.

When approached by Historic Occoquan for a donation, Bob Ritenour, a member of VFW Post 7916, said it wasn't hard to convince the other veterans that it was a good idea to support.

"We are very involved in the community," Ritenour said. "We're located in Occoquan and we take a great deal of interest in this town."

Now Historic Occoquan, along with the Prince William Convention and Visitors' Bureau, which has also purchased 15 bricks, will be among the first to have their logos displayed when the pathway is created. While the exact design has not been finalized yet, it will also include the town's bicentennial logo in the middle.

"We are ready to start laying the first 10 feet of the walkway very soon," Smith said.

Smith said he would like to see the construction under way before the town's Fall Craft Show in late September.

"We want to show everyone, including the crafters, that we are serious about this," Smith said. "The first 10 feet will be an incentive for more people to buy bricks."

The program is not limited to town residents, Smith said.

Since the town is a tourism destination for shopping and dining, Smith

encourages anyone and any organization that appreciates the town of Occoquan to consider buying a brick or 15 for a logo.

"We would like to have the logos of several entities that support us or make up the town," Smith said. "I've always seen the make-up of the town being its residents, merchants and tourists."

"Once laid in place, these bricks will become a landmark legacy of the town," he said.

The brick program is just one of several projects under way in Occoquan to mark its 200th anniversary. Monthly programs, such as a Victorian fashion show, Civil War encampment, 5K run and antique car are among some of the past events.

Also ongoing through September are Bicentennial Riverboat tours of the Occoquan River on Saturdays and Sundays. Beginning at noon and running until 5 p.m. the Miss Rivershore takes passengers on hour-long rides of the river from the Mamie Davis Park down to Belmont Bay and back. The tours leave every hour and 15 minutes. The cost is \$10 for those 13 and older.

For more information about the "Buy a Brick" program or other bicentennial events, contact town hall at (703) 491-1918, Ext. 10.

Staff writer Aliene Streng can be reached at (703) 878-8010.