

Belleville's 9/11 park to get World Trade Center steel

Friday, April 29, 2011
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BELLEVILLE TIMES
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Belleville's 9/11 Memorial Park will soon be home to steel salvaged from the World Trade Center, Councilman Vincent Cozzarelli has announced. He is also vice chairman of the park's committee.



DALE MINCEY/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Belleville High School senior Jeffrey Vicente plays taps at last year's anniversary ceremony at Belleville's 9/11 Memorial Park.

Committee officials applied to receive the steel months ago, Cozzarelli said. It is expected to arrive sometime this summer, at the behest of the Port Authority of NY and NJ.

In the days and weeks after the attacks of 9/11, Port Authority officials started to collect artifacts from the World Trade Center such as leveled steel, signs and turn-styles to be used in a memorial at the former Trade Center site, said Port Authority spokesman Steve Coleman.

Artifacts for that memorial have since been chosen, so the Port Authority, in early 2010, began soliciting the remaining objects. About 1,500 requests for artifacts have been received, Coleman said, with more than 1,100 approved. The requests hail from all 50 U.S. states as well as five foreign countries.

Neighboring Bloomfield will also receive World Trade Center steel.

"Everybody gets a different amount of steel, depending on the kind of memorial display they

have proposed to develop," Coleman said, stated requests for steel have ranged from 6 inches to 43 feet long. Belleville, he said, has not yet been "matched" with a piece of steel.

When the committee first applied for the artifact, a Belleville resident volunteered to sculpt it into artwork for the park, Committee Chairperson Tom Grolimond said. Now that the steel's delivery is definite, the committee hopes to solidify plans with the volunteer.

Coincidentally, just as the steel will arrive, another round of park construction will ensue. With all construction materials funded through donations, park work is being done little by little, as donations come in.

In this summer's phase of work, another walkway/patio area of paver bricks will be laid, and additional park benches will be installed, Cozzarelli said.

As part of fundraising, the committee is selling memorial bricks and personalized park benches. The bricks, in 4-by-8-inch and 8-by-8-inch sizes, are available for a \$200 or \$125, respectively. A \$750 contribution is asked for each bench.

Additionally, the 9/11 Memorial Park committee is holding an all-you-can-eat beefsteak dinner on Friday, May 6, at 6:30 p.m., at Belleville's Knights of Columbus Hall at 94 Bridge St. Money raised will be used to construct the Twin Towers out of paving bricks.

Tickets to the event are \$45. To purchase tickets, or for more information, contact Cozzarelli at 973-460-2746.

"So far, everyone's been great. People have been buying more pavers, and we're selling tickets to the beefsteak dinner," Cozzarelli said. "The town is really showing its support."