

Kiosk completion ends the second stage

by Lisa Fischer

The second phase of Saline County's Veterans Memorial was completed on April 24 with the installation of a veterans kiosk.

A Windy Prairie installation team and members of The Saline County Veterans' Memorial Committee gathered at the memorial to discuss and assist in the installation process.

"We're trying to honor all the veterans of Saline County," said Forrest Doyle, Saline County's veterans service officer.

The first phase of the project was construction of the 37-foot plaza, pentagon, obelisk, two flagpoles and lights. The second phase consisted of installing the kiosk hardware and software and the third phase entails installing brick murals, benches and any additional flagpoles and lights. The landscape will be installed by the Wilber Garden Club.

Doyle said there are about 3,819 names and 240 pictures of Saline County veterans already on the kiosk with room for more.

He said any veteran, young or old, from Saline County can have their information in the kiosk at no cost to them by calling his office at (402) 821-2990,

sending him an email at salinevet@diodecom.net or sending the information to P.O. Box 865, Wilber, NE 68465.

Francis Jefferson Coates and Victor Vifquain are amongst the veterans imputed into the kiosk. Coates was a Union Solider and a member of the 7th Wisconsin Infantry during the Civil War.

He received the Congressional Medal of Honor during the Battle of Gettysburg after being shot in the face causing him to lose both eyes. In 1864, he left military service and later moved to Dorchester. Coates is buried in the Dorchester cemetery.

Vifquain also received the Congressional Medal of Honor on June 8, 1865, for action at Fort Blakely, Ala., on April 9 of that year. In 1857 he settled permanently in America in the Blue River Valley of Saline County.

He did not wait for Nebraska units to be formed when the Civil War broke out in 1861 and enlisted in the Fifty-third New York Infantry.

He went on active duty as a lieutenant colonel and adjutant of the Third Nebraska Infantry under Col. William Jennings Bryan during the Spanish-American War and became regi-

mental commander when Bryan resigned.

Vifquain took the regiment to Cuba as an occupational force following the war. After the peace treaty Vifquain retired to his home in Lincoln and was later buried in Lincoln's Calvary Cemetery.

Windy Prairie Incorporated

installed the kiosk. The company based in Indianola has made many kiosks in the past, but never a veterans' kiosk until now.

"This is our 30th kiosk and it's a little different," said Steve Richman, co-chairman of Windy Prairie.

He said the company, which
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PHOTO BY LISA FISCHER

With the end of installation in sight, Bill Rogers, co-chairman of Windy Prairie (left), stands next to Steve Richman, Dave Pedersen, Windy Prairie IT employee, Forrest Doyle, Ron Corbett and Chris Richman, Windy Prairie IT employee, in front of the kiosk each worked to get implemented.

Kiosk

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started in 1996 and produces both hardware and software, has produced 30 cemetery kiosks since 2000.

A member of the Saline County Veteran's Committee approached the company about a year ago regarding interest in creating a veterans' kiosk after viewing the company's cemetery kiosk in York.

About a year later the company's information system technicians and manufacturers produced an easy to use and dependable kiosk.

With the implementation of the kiosk, Richman said the company is looking towards new endeavors such as more veteran kiosks, alumni kiosks and angels of hope kiosks.

With the end of memorial construction in sight, the committee is already planning to show the kiosk during Czech Days on Aug. 2-4.

Ron Corbett, co-chairman of the Saline County veteran's memorial committee, said they are planning on having a live demonstration two hours before and after parades.

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