

# THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE



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SATURDAY

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## Huey helicopter flights thrill both veterans and civilians

BY GREG THOMPSON  
THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE

Cold bottles of water were of little help in the heat Thursday morning at the Elizabethtown Nature Park. Military veterans and supporters, or as one person declared them to be, "patriots," gathered beneath a tent to await their flight on a Huey helicopter.

"This will be better than a roller-coaster ride, but a lot more safe," said Phil Marshall, one of the pilots, as he did a safety briefing with the first group of riders.

Marshall instructed the six individuals to leave their hats behind, as they never would see them again, and there could be the possibility of causing damage to the helicopter if it were to be sucked or blown out.

Marshall was very reassuring, though, saying, "Even if we were to lose an engine, we'll set her down nice and soft."

Veterans were brought over to participate from Robinbrooke Assisting Living in Elizabethtown and the Carl M. Brashear Veterans Center in Radcliff.

Most everyone under the tent, drinking water or not, had already begun to sweat as the temperature quickly made its way into the upper 80s with a heat index of 95-degrees.

James Knight strolled around the outer edges of the tent but was able to remain in the shade. The 22-year U.S. Army veteran,

serving with Special Services Airborne, was no stranger to military helicopters.

Occasionally, he would glance over at the two Hueys that sat near the replica Vietnam Memorial Wall, as if he was reconnecting with a friend. Knight has made around 79 jumps and when asked how he was doing, he would first say, "I'm sore."

Some of those jumps were for training purposes. Most were not. "If it wasn't for one of those, I wouldn't be here," Marine Corps veteran Rich Cleaver said.

During his four years in the Marines, Cleaver was awarded two Purple Hearts. He was a machine gunner and remembered "some people didn't like me much."

He owes his life to a medevac Huey transport and the personnel on board. The first time he was shot in Vietnam, he remembers a medic walking over to him and pulling out what looked like a cigarette that must have been a foot long.

"He lit it, lowered it to me, placed in between my lips to take a drag and the next thing I knew I was waking up in Japan," Cleaver said.

Cleaver, 78, is originally from just south of Pittsburgh. He volunteers with the American Huey 360 Museum in Peru, Indiana, and it was his first time visiting the Nature Park.

"I have some friends with names on that wall," Cleaver said.



GREG THOMPSON/The News-Enterprise

**A American Huey helicopter flew up and over the Vietnam Memorial Wall replica at the Elizabethtown Nature Park on Thursday.**

Amy Grigsby's reason for taking a flight Thursday was to honor the memories of her parents, both Vietnam veterans.

She also did it for her mother, Eleanor Nancy Henson, whose birthday was Thursday. She would have been 72.

"It was a lifetime experience," Grigsby said. "It was amazing."

As a Girl Scout, she remembered being able to sit inside a helicopter, but this was her first time flying in one.

Bob Wade climbed on board for the first time also. His father,

SEE HUEY/PAGE A6



GREG THOMPSON/The News-Enterprise

**From left, Donald Mleczo, Coy Pierce and Wayne Hayes, residents of Robinbrooke Assisted Living, wait Thursday to be the first group up in a Huey helicopter.**

## E'town Fire Department donates \$40,000 fire engine to Stephensburg

BY BAILEY REED  
THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE

For the first time in its history, the Elizabethtown Fire Department has donated a fire truck to another department, making a gift to the Stephensburg Fire Department. The truck is a 2004 La France.

"Right now, the county fire departments are really struggling between finding members and finances. Stephensburg was in need of a truck," Elizabethtown Fire Chief Mark Malone said. "I talked to the mayor about it, and the mayor was in favor of us just transferring the truck to them."

Malone added that it is very unique for a fire department to donate a truck as they are usually sold to other departments.

The 2004 model, valued at \$40,000, will be a beneficial resource for the Stephensburg Fire Department, a department run entirely by volunteer firefighters. The full-time paid Elizabethtown Fire Department serves residents within the E'town city limits, while other nearby communities like Vine Grove, Rineyville, Glendale, Sonora, Cecilia and Stephensburg are served mostly by volunteer firefighters.

"It'll be our newest piece of apparatus, and it'll help make sure that we have something that's gonna last us a lot longer,"



BAILEY REED/The News-Enterprise

**The Elizabethtown Fire Department donated a 2004 model firetruck valued at \$40,000 to the all-volunteer Stephensburg Fire Department.**

Stephensburg Fire Chief Shane Carpenter said.

He also added that the old truck that they were using before this donation from E'town had a pump panel that was a reel, whereas the new truck does not require that. The new truck also will house Stephensburg's rescue tools, which the volunteer department couldn't bring along as easily before.

"We greatly appreciate Chief Malone and Elizabethtown Fire Department for their donation as well as the city of Elizabethtown. It's things like this that

help the smaller departments be able to continue to provide a service for our community, because without it, we wouldn't be able to operate," Carpenter said.

Malone said E'town is not short on firetrucks as it already replaced the one they donated with a newer model. He also hopes both departments will be able to help one another through mutual aid in the future.

"Hopefully, you know, it'll make a difference in the county and if we need them on mutual aid, they can always come back with assistance," Malone said.

## Meade County now owns 2,261-acre recreation area

BY THE NEWS-ENTERPRISE

A public park for generations, Meade Fiscal Court accepted the official transfer Thursday of 2,261 acres of forest, trails and campgrounds known as the Otter Creek Outdoor Recreation Area.

"This is a proud day for Meade County," Judge-Executive Troy Kok said. "Otter Creek has always been more than just a park, it is part of our community's identity. Bringing it under local ownership gives us the opportunity to honor its history and once again establish it as a premier outdoor recreation destination."

This achievement is the result of a partnership between the Meade County government, the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and the National Park Service, a statement from KDFWR said. Through years of collaboration and a shared commitment to conservation and outdoor recreation, the groups have made it possible for Otter Creek to enter a new era under local stewardship.

Owning the park property, which stretches along the Ohio River, will allow the county to invest in improvements that enhance the outdoor amenities and visitor experience.

Building on the county's successful management of Otter Creek Campground, the state department said it expects the county to continue expanding recreational opportunities, supporting tourism and creating new economic benefits for local businesses.

For its part, Meade Fiscal Court

expressed a commitment to preserving Otter Creek's legacy while ensuring it remains a place where families can camp, hike, hunt, fish, bike, paddle and enjoy the outdoors for generations to come.

"Meade County Fiscal Court has been a proven partner with its operation of the campground at Otter Creek for the last two years, and they will be great stewards of the entire property for years to come," Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Rich Storm said. "County leadership has demonstrated concerted interest in preserving this special property for future generations and we are excited to continue our partnership as we maintain public hunting and fishing opportunities throughout Otter Creek."

The park is located off Ky. 1638 between Brandenburg Junction and Muldraugh and is just minutes from the Fort Knox Reservation.

Founded by the National Park Service in 1934 as a recreational area, it was operated for decades by the City of Louisville although it is significantly down river from the city and roughly 30 minutes by car. Kentucky Fish and Wildlife took over operation of the property in 2011.

Kentucky Fish and Wildlife will continue to operate and maintain the property's shooting range, giving hunters and shooting sports enthusiasts an opportunity for target practice or to site-in their firearms. A shooting range permit, free with any annual hunting or fishing license by checking the applicable box on the department's License Sales webpage, is required to use the range.



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**SINCE YOU ASKED**

Results of The News-Enterprise online poll as of 5 p.m. Thursday. Do you plan to attend the Hardin County Fair next week? Yes: 14.9% • No: 85.1%

**TODAY'S QUESTION:** If expense was not a factor, would you ride in a helicopter for fun?

**COMING MONDAY**

Read about the 11-year-old featured in the Broadway musical "Annie" and her canine co-star. The play begins a nine-show run next week in Bardstown.

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