

East McCarty roundabouts to feature patriotic displays

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New patriotic displays will greet those driving into Jefferson City on U.S. 50 this summer.

To educate people and support veterans, the East Side Business Association and American Legion Post 5 plan to add patriotic displays to two roundabouts at the intersection of East McCarty Street and U.S. 50.

The north roundabout will contain a 6-foot-tall eagle statute on top of a stone pedestal.

The south roundabout will showcase a 40-foot-tall flagpole with a pentagon-shaped monument containing patriotic messages at the base of the pole.

"We cannot be more proud of what we're doing," ESBA President Hank Stratman said. "We call this an A-plus product."

After seeing Capital Region Medical Center's hands and butterfly display at the Jefferson Street and Stadium Boulevard roundabout more than a year ago, Stratman said, the association knew it wanted to do something similar to market the east side of town.

The association plans to adopt the East McCarty Street roundabouts through the Missouri Department of Transportation's Growing Together program, which encourages plantings and displays on rights-of-way to enhance state highways and neighboring communities' appearances.

Natalie Roark, MoDOT Central District assistant district engineer, said the project is more in-depth than previous Growing Together projects the Central District has worked on.

MoDOT worked with the ESBA to ensure the displays would not create safety issues, she added.

"I think it's going to be a really exciting project, and it's really going to enhance it," Roark said. "I think it's a great thing for everyone involved."

The ESBA and MoDOT currently are working on an agreement for the adoption, which would require that ESBA maintain the interior of the roundabouts.

Since the ESBA wanted patriotic displays, it decided to partner with the local American Legion Post 5.

"How many people out there really understand and value the veterans and all they do?" asked Don Cryderman, a veteran and American Legion project officer. "So the patriotic theme, this is a good thing to make and grow. It's an awesome dedication to the veterans and the city especially."

Not only will the displays educate youth, Stratman said, they also will send a message.

"I think it's time that the mainstream, we resist a little bit, push back and say, 'Look, we believe in the Pledge of Allegiance and the states and in the republic for which it stands. One nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all,'" Stratman, a veteran, said. "To get that done, you have to support and defend the Constitution. You just cannot ignore the Constitution when it's inconvenient for you, which has happened.

"That's the real reason we're doing this — is to educate and kind of get in the face of those that want to move away from our traditional values as Americans."

Both organizations hope to begin construction in the spring, with project completion expected by July 4.

The estimated price for the project is \$60,000-\$70,000, said Stratman and Dee Dee Cryderman, who is also a veteran and American Legion project officer.

With several local businesses donating supplies and services, they added, the project is currently \$25,000 short.

Both organizations are accepting donations to help build and maintain the displays. Those wishing to donate can send funds to the East Side Business Association at P.O. Box 106001, Jefferson City, MO, 65110, or to the American Legion Roscoe Enloe Post 5 at 1423 Tanner Bridge Road, Jefferson City, MO, 65101.

Those who donate \$2,000 will receive name plates for MoDOT's Growing Together signs, which will be located at each of the seven legs of the roundabouts. Of the 21 name plates, Stratman said, 10 are already accounted for.

Funds would go toward the construction and maintenance of the patriotic displays, including electrical services, insurance, flag replacement and repairs.

The ESBA also funded the Freedom Corner at the corner of East High and East McCarty streets in 2013. The display features a granite monument topped with a bronze eagle and engraved pavers.

The displays align with the ESBA's strategic plan, Stratman said, which seeks to improve economic growth, enhance educational opportunities, and increase advocacy and influence.

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