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# Your community newspaper Exponent

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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2016

Pirates take title



## Jackson Investors announce \$9.4 million for projects

By Jeff Steers  
Exponent editor

Jackson County could use a few more days like Nov. 4.

Two major construction projects were announced as official during a pair of ceremonies held near downtown Jackson.

American 1 Credit Union announced a \$4 million donation to Jackson County for the construction of a new convention center at the fairgrounds. The American 1 Convention Center is expected to be able to hold 500 people with a full kitchen for weddings, parties and family events.

The convention center is part of a larger use plan for the fairground site created by Jackson County officials. Construction on the American 1 Convention Center will begin in 2017. The new building will be sited on the southeastern side of the fairground property, along Ganson Street and the Grand River.

"We chose the future location of

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page 2

American 1 Credit Union President and CEO David Puckett announces the company's \$4 million donation to Jackson County to build a new 500-seat convention center.



## Honoring our best



Josephine "Nellie" Denny received the prestigious Purple Heart Medal, as well as several service medals, on behalf of her late brother, Sgt. Paul L. Rohr, shown below.



By John Hummer  
Exponent staff writer

After many years following his service and subsequent death from Korean War-inflicted disease, U.S. Army Sgt. Paul Leander Rohr was awarded the prestigious Purple Heart Medal – received in his name by his sister Josephine "Nellie" Denny – last week in a veterans ceremony at the Onsted American Legion post. Denny was said to have been very close to her brother. "After all these years to be



going through this is heart-breaking," said Denny holding back tears. "He deserves it."

The medal was presented to Denny by Maj. Gen. Leonard Isabelle, Commander of the Michigan Air National Guard and by Congressman Tim Walberg with several members of her family at her side.

The day began with the Jackson College Jazz Band performing patriotic music, an invocation by the Rev. Tom McMichael, and welcoming remarks by Walberg.

World War II U.S. Army Air Force veterans Charles Peart and Carlos Barricklaw Jr. were the first honorees, though Barricklaw was unable to attend the ceremony.

"I know it's a rough life sometimes, but I enjoyed my time in the service," Peart said.

"Thank you for your service and your willingness to stand for this country's greatest ideals," Walberg said in honoring them.

Next several local Vietnam veterans were honored and received lapel pins and certificates from Walberg, to recognize them and thank them for their service.

"It's actually pretty special

See *Honoring our Best* page 3

## Jackson County Animal Shelter expanding

By Brad Flory  
Exponent special writer

Jackson County's Animal Shelter will be expanded to provide more and better space for cats, and construction won't cost taxpayers a dime.

A not-for-profit group called Friends of the Animals for the Jackson area has offered to build a shelter addition of 400 square feet to house cats avail-

able for adoption.

The offer won preliminary acceptance from county commissioners on Nov. 1, although details must be worked out in legal agreement to coordinate construction.

Animal shelter director Don Hayduk said the project will create a better facility for both cats and humans.

"Our hope is it will increase

our adoption rate," Hayduk said.

For more than a year, housing of cats at the animal shelter has transitioned away from single-cat cages toward open-space confinements called "cat condos," Hayduk said.

Cat condos hold multiple cats in "a living-room environment," Hayduk said. Compared to cages, condos decrease stress for confined cats, which helps to

maintain their immune systems and lower infection rates, he said.

Friends of the Animals has provided financial support to make the move toward cat condos possible, and the proposed construction will be a big next step.

Three large rooms for eight to 10 cats will be created, according to Nancy O'Keefe, spokes-

woman for Friends of the Animals. Cats will roam freely in spaces the Friends describe as "showroom and playroom."

For humans considering adoption, it will be a more pleasant space to view and interact with cats, Hayduk said.

"It will create a much less stressful environment," said Diane Cerqueira, president of

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## Durkee Seager Post to serve free dinner for vets

The Onsted American Legion Auxiliary Durkee Seager Post No. 550 is hosting a Swiss steak dinner Veterans Day Friday, Nov. 11, from 5 to 7 p.m. Veterans eat free. The post is located at 333 Connor St., Onsted.

## Free Veterans Day lunch at Jerry's Pub

Jerry's Pub is serving a free lunch to veterans on Veterans Day Friday, Nov. 11, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Jerry's Pub is located at 650 Egan Hwy., Brooklyn. For more information, call 467-4700.



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Vietnam Army veteran Tom Luck is congratulated and thanked for his service by Congressman Tim Walberg as Major General Leonard Isabelle looks on.

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## Honoring our best... from page 1

and hard to believe it's been this many years," said Vietnam veteran Tom Luck. "It's an honor."  
 Fellow Vietnam veteran William Ruttkofsky was pleased to get long overdue positive recognition for his service.

"I think it's good. Vietnam veterans deserve something like this after coming home and getting rocks thrown at us when we got off the plane when we were trying to protect our country."

Walberg acknowledged that when many Vietnam veterans returned home it was a dark day in America.

"I think we've learned from that," he said.  
 "On behalf of a grateful nation, it is a privilege to present you with this symbol of thanks and to honor you for your service, valor and sacrifice when our country needed you," Walberg said prior to handing out the pins and Purple Heart Medal.

"We need to take care of the folks who served us so well – our American heroes," said Isabelle.

It was a special day for the Rohr family for the great honor bestowed upon Sgt. Rohr in the Purple Heart Medal.

The Purple Heart is awarded in the name

of the President to members of the armed forces of the United States who are wounded or killed by an instrument of war in the hands of the enemy. It is often awarded posthumously to the next of kin in the name of those who are killed in action or die of wounds received in action. With its forerunner, the Badge of Military Merit, which took the form of a heart made of purple cloth, the Purple Heart is the oldest military award still given to U.S. military members.

Rohr was the youngest of five children, three years younger than his sister Nelie. Their mother died of complications from childbirth shortly after Rohr was born.

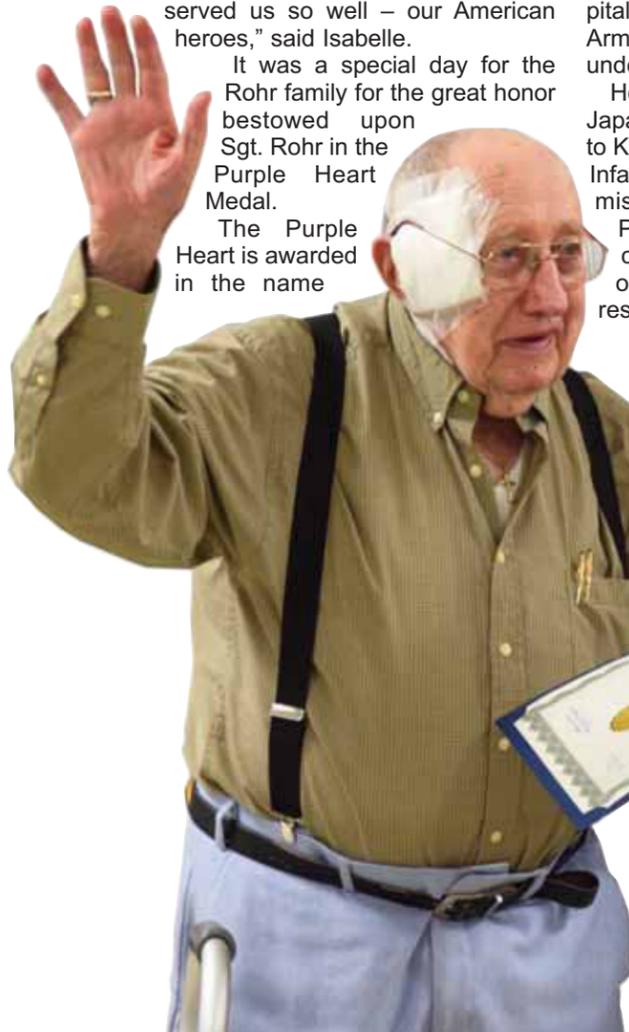
"He was so funny!" Nelie said with a smile on her face.

Born in 1930, when Rohr turned 18 he decided to enlist in the Army for four years. He was sent to Osaka, Japan, where he worked in the Army hospital. He loved it there so much that when the Army wanted him to re-enlist, he agreed with the understanding that he would return to Osaka.

However, while in Seattle awaiting transport to Japan, his orders were changed and he was sent to Korea. Then-Corporal Rohr was part of the 2nd Infantry Division and was involved in a combat mission in November 1950. He was taken Prisoner of War on Nov. 26, 1950, and kept in captivity at Pyokong, N. Korea where he died on March 12, 1951, of disease incurred as the result of his capture. His remains were not recovered.

Rohr was promoted to sergeant while in MIA status and awarded the Purple Heart Medal, the Combat Infantryman Badge, the Prisoner of War Medal, the Korean Service Medal, the United States Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Korean Presidential Unit Citation, and the Republic of Korea War Service Medal.

In his remarks, Walberg thanked the Onsted Senior Center for hosting the event.



World War II veteran Charles Peart acknowledges applause from the audience after he accepted an award from Congressman Tim Walberg.



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