

Donations help rebuild VFW

Naugatuck post gets facelift with aid of businesses

BY PAUL SINGLEY
REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN

NAUGATUCK — They say if you love your freedom, you should thank a veteran.

Now, members of the Naugatuck Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 1946 on Rubber Avenue are the ones saying thank you to several local businesses that have stepped up to help the post get back on its feet.

The businesses are helping the organization repair its hall — which suffered from years of water damage due to a leaky roof and cracked walls. The post used to hold large events in the hall to raise money, but two years ago had to stop because the hall was in such bad condition.

The post considered closing its doors because of a lack of revenue.

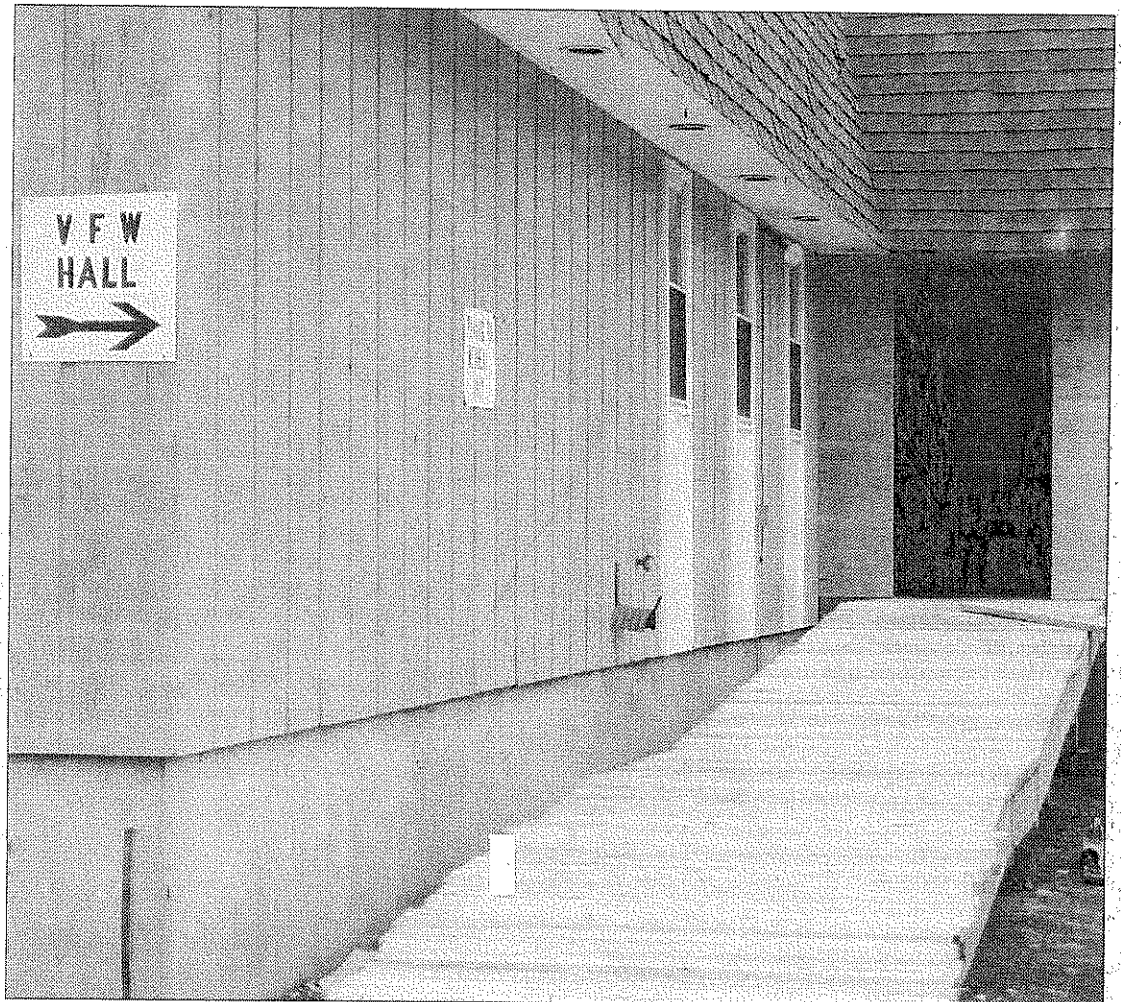
The hall now is in better shape than it has been in several years, and members are coming back in droves.

The post has a new roof thanks to work donated by Gary Brown of Brown's Roofing and several other repairs done for free by local businesses, including the first wooden wheelchair ramp in the post's history. The hall will be used for a Memorial Day ceremony, and members hope all the repairs will be completed by Veterans Day in November.

Post Commander Stanley Borusiewicz, who is also chairman of the Naugatuck Veterans Council, said the VFW closed the hall about five years ago because huge puddles formed inside during rain storms. Three years ago, past commanders tore down part of the wall and planned to rebuild through donations.

But the post received just a little more than \$4,000 in donations, far short of the estimated \$100,000 it needed.

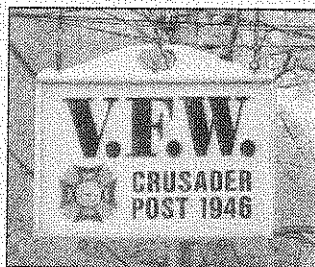
So far, local companies have donated close to \$75,000 worth



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Donations to Naugatuck VFW Post 1946 have totaled more than \$75,000, which went toward several renovations to the post hall, including this wheelchair ramp that is under construction. The post hall has been closed for five years because of needed repairs.

HELPING VETERANS



The VFW has received help to repair its hall from Brown's Roofing of Naugatuck, Cook's Cafe in Naugatuck and the Guardians, Fat Bastards and Law Dogs motorcycle clubs. It has also received donations of building materials, labor and other amenities from the following businesses: Imagineers property management, Rodriguez Associates architects, Scott Fennelly of Weatherite vinyl siding, M&S Paving, H.J. Bushka & Sons, Washington Concrete, Brooks Landscaping, Valley Floor Covering, PJ Electric and Barrett Outdoor Communications.

of equipment and labor for jobs such as new vinyl siding on the building, a new roof, a new parking lot, landscaping, a new floor, electrical work and more.

Borusiewicz said the VFW is looking for contractors to help install a new heating system.

All of the work is being overseen by the Imagineers housing

management company, whose program management director, Kenneth Schultz, is a veteran and friend of Borusiewicz.

"This place means a lot to the community," said Schultz. "It's great that companies are stepping up to help in such tough economic times because they care about veterans."

The commitment to the organization has caused a spike in membership.

The club now has 375 active members, he said, up about 90 from this time last year, Borusiewicz said.

"This is a place that offers help to veterans with any problems they had from their service medically or financially," he said. "We help vets with their schooling, and have a place for them to talk to someone if they have a need."