

Community Invited to Celebrate Groundbreaking for the Slate Belt Disabled Veterans Housing Project NOON, Saturday, October 22, 2022

First Project of its Kind in the Slate Belt (Slate Belt/Northampton County, PA)

By Gallagher & Gallagher Worldwide, Inc. (GGW)

SLATE BELT - The Slate Belt Veterans Association invites the community to the Groundbreaking Celebration for the Slate Belt Disabled Veterans Housing project. The Celebration will be held at Noon on Saturday, October 22, 2022. The celebration will take place at the site located at 428 Market Street, between 4th and Market, Bangor, Pa 18013. SBVA's immediate goal is to develop and build a housing facility for veterans with service-connected, combat-related disabilities. The Bangor High School Band will lead off the program. The headline speaker for the October 22nd Groundbreaking program is Sgt. Ryan M. Pitts, U.S. Army Veteran and Medal of Honor Recipient. Pitts, born in 1985, distinguished himself by extraordinary acts of heroism at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty and awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on July 13, 2008, during the Battle of Wanat in Afghanistan. He was serving as a Forward Observer in 2d Platoon, 2d Battalion (Airborne), 503d Infantry Regiment, 173d Airborne Brigade.

In addition, there will be brief remarks from local dignitaries, business, and community leaders. The program will conclude with the Groundbreaking ceremony. The celebration will take place rain or shine, there will be a tent on the property. Food will be provided. The Slate Belt Veterans Association (SBVA) is a 503c3 not-for-profit foundation based out of Bangor, PA. The SBVA all volunteer Board is mostly made up of veterans, including those with service-connected disabilities. The current members of the Board are Leon Vanderpool, President; Tegwyn Hughes, Vice President; Toni E. Lynch, Treasurer; Terry DeGroote, Civil Engineer; Brad Kennedy, Financial Adviser, and Cindy Beck, Secretary. The primary purpose of the SBVA is to honor those who have served and to support and assist those who have returned home, especially those who returned with service-connected disabilities.

SBVA has purchased the property situated at 428 Market Street (4th and Market) in Bangor, Pennsylvania for the future project. The project is in large part possible due to the generosity of Brian Perin. Brian passed away in 2017, and his generous gift is the cornerstone to move the project forward. Brian was co-owner of Grand Central Sanitation as well as other related local businesses.

The late Michael Kovalevich, a veteran himself had proposed the construction of housing for veterans with disabilities. He had seen firsthand how difficult it was for injured veterans to find affordable, ADA-compliant accommodations. "The intent is to build at our cost," Kovalevich had said. "Any excess funds will be restricted for future Veterans' needs." The motion was put on the floor for a vote and the SBVA Board unanimously approved the motion to proceed with the project. "This project is the first of its kind in the Slate Belt," said Leon Vanderpool, SBVA Board President. "We are thrilled to be having the Groundbreaking and look forward to seeing the community at the celebration."

In addition to Ryan, other confirmed speakers to date who will deliver brief comments include, • The Honorable Leonard R. Zito, who retired as Northampton County Senior Judge and who is a lifelong resident of Bangor. He is a U.S. Veteran who served in the U.S. Navy from 1960-1964. • Judge Edward Smith, currently serves as district judge of U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of PA. He is a 27-year veteran of the US Navy Judge Advocate General's Corps and holds the rank of Captain. Judge Smith served as Commanding Officer of the Naval Reserve Justice School. • Peter Reisen, President of the American Legion. Peter was stationed in Korea served in the U.S. Army for most of the 1960s • Brad Kennedy, decorated combat veteran of the Vietnam war, author of the book "Betrayal, Will Stone in Vietnam." In 2019, the PBS National Memorial Day Concert, played tribute to Brad Kennedy and Ernest "Pete" Peterson in the portion of the program on Valor and Brotherhood, the story of two soldiers.

Brad's story was re-enacted by actor Joe Mantegna. Brad serves as Slate Belt Veterans Association's financial advisor. • State Senator Mario Scavello, an avid supporter of Veterans is also scheduled to speak, as well as State Representative Joseph Emrick and State Representative Ann Flood. SBVA Board also invited Senator Toomey and Senator

Casey, State Senator Lisa Boscola and Mayor Mary Ellen DeFranco. • Leon Vanderpool, President of Slate Belt Veterans Association and Toni Lynch, Veteran of U.S. Army, (1960-1969) who served as First Lieutenant in Vietnam, Treasurer of the Slate Belt Veterans Association, will also be speaking on behalf of SBVA. Anyone wishing to attend and/or donate to the project is encouraged to visit www.sbva.org.

Your donation will help provide ADA housing for combat warriors with disabilities and their families! The Slate Belt Veterans Administration is a 501c3, your donation is 100% tax deductible. Your generosity will go right to work on the completion of this special project.

