

# Blanchard Veteran's Memorial soon to become a reality

By Traci Chapman

It's a chance to remember not just the fallen, but also anyone who has made the sacrifice to serve in something bigger than themselves in the name of their country.

It's the Blanchard Veteran's Memorial and it's close to becoming a reality, officials say.

"We are excited about this, and we've had a lot of support," Blanchard City Attorney Robert Floyd said. "The architect estimated a cost of about \$300,000, and we've already raised about \$100,000 of that."

To date, \$100,409 of project costs have been raised, records showed.

The new memorial will be distinctive – and, Floyd said, only the second of its kind across the country because it utilizes glass bricks. A wall will feature an eternal flame, and each military service branch will be honored with individual glass panels and a flagpole.

The courtyard will be surrounded by four pentagon-shaped pillars, which will honor veterans through the use of personalized 4 x 8 inch laser etched glass honor bricks. The pillars will also feature LED lighting.

The city has procured the site for the new memorial – fittingly on Veterans Memorial Highway, not far from Blanchard City Hall. The city manager said the plan at this time was to begin work on it this year by Veteran's Day.

The project design is unusual among American veterans memorials and seen only one other place cross the country – in Jeffersontown, Kentucky, Floyd said. Photos of that wall illustrate the scale of the Blanchard project and the beauty of the glass artwork design utilized to honor those who have served their country.



**The architectural rendering of the Blanchard Veterans Memorial. The project is unique among its kind across the country, featuring glass bricks and panels.**

The bulk of project donations so far have been through sponsorships; sponsorships are available through purchase of a "sponsor panel," and in-kind donations are also available, officials said.

Honor bricks do just that – honor individual current and former service members and are available to anyone, no matter where they live, what service branch they were in and no matter when and where they served – from Blanchard or beyond, the city manager said.

"We want to include anyone who wants to be a part of this – not just Blanchard citizens but anyone who served," Floyd said. "This is a major effort for our city, and we want to do it right."

Committee members may accept donations or they may be taken to Blanchard City Hall during regular business hours. It is located at 122 North Main Street and can be reached by calling 405-485-9392. All donations are tax deductible in compliance with Internal Revenue



**Only one other memorial in the United States features the look similar to the planned Blanchard Veterans Memorial - one in Jeffersontown, Kentucky, pictured.**

Service guidelines, officials said.

Memorial commitment members include Blanchard Mayor Eddie Odle and Ward 2 City Councilman Michael Scalf, Sr., who serves as chair; joining them were BETA Trustee Jeff Heefner, American Legion Post 261 Commander Gary Hoffman and VFW Post 3608 Commander Larry Mullin. Ex-officio committee members

include Floyd, City Planner Ryan Conner, Blanchard finance director Daniel Ofsthun and parks director Chris Whittenbach.

Donations may also be made online at the veterans memorial page included in the city of Blanchard's website. That is located at <https://www.cityofblanchard.us/community/pages/blanchard-veterans-memorial>.