

Delaware leads in raising money for troops' calls

By Jesse Chadderdon
Staff Reporter

Despite having the one of the smallest Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) contingents in the nation, Delaware is among the leaders in raising funds for Operation Uplink, a program which pools money to purchase calling cards for deployed military personnel.

In 2004, for example, Delaware's VFW donated \$46,000 to the program, the highest of any state in the nation. According to Linda Ferguson, national coordinator for the program, Delaware is among the highest contributors in the country each year.

Jesse Kitson, quartermaster to the Delaware VFW and Operation Uplink coordinator, said most of the money is raised at the organization's

"Red, White and Blue Gala."

"That's our biggest fundraiser and people really enjoy coming out and participating," he said. "It's our big event each year."

Since Kitson became involved in the program in 2001, the event has raised more than \$120,000.

Money is contributed by VFW members individually, as well as by private donors who are solicited by members. The money is pooled and sent to the National Operation Uplink Headquarters in Kansas City, where it used to purchase AT&T phone cards at below market rates. The cards are then distributed to deployed military personnel overseas. Some of the money is earmarked for Delaware personnel.

Kitson, a Vietnam Veteran, said he believes the strong support for the program among VFW members is that the understanding that calling home

To contribute money to **Operation Uplink**, send a check or money order to:

Jesse Kitson
Quartermaster, Delaware Dept. of VFW
167 Carnation Drive
Magnolia, DE 19962

Contributions can also be made through www.operationuplink.org.

can be a huge moral booster.

"Most of us are Vietnam Vets or World War II Vets and we didn't have an opportunity to call home like they do today," he said. "We would have loved to be able to talk to our families more often."

Kitson said that he was able to talk to his family only twice during the year he was deployed in Vietnam.

"We had to use what was called the MARS system," he said. "It's basically a ham radio outfit where a bunch of us are talking over one another. It takes anywhere from five minutes to five days to connect. Nowadays, they get to call home practically on a daily basis."

Nationally, Operation Uplink has raised more than 7.5 million phone cards for deployed military personnel and hospitalized veterans since it was founded in 1996, Ferguson said. For Mother's Day, soldiers in Iraq were able to call home for free from 200 Internet locations throughout that country.

Minors restricted from graffiti tools

By Jesse Chadderdon
Staff Reporter

Legislation that would require retailers to restrict access to graffiti implements such as spray paint and broad-tipped markers has been approved unanimously by the New Castle County Council.

The legislation, passed May 23, forbids retailers from selling such implements to minors and requires them to keep the items in a secure setting. The legislation also makes it illegal for minors to possess such items unless they have expressed consent from a parent, legal guardian, teacher or art instructor.

The sale of the items will be enforced by the county's code enforcement officers, while county police will enforce illegal possession by minors.

Councilman Joseph Reda (D-Elsmere), who sponsored the legislation, said he hopes it is a first step in curbing graffiti throughout the county.

"We need this to combat this cultural disease that is infecting the neighborhoods and businesses in our community," he said.

Councilman John Cartier (D-Penny Hill) said he strongly supported the legislation.

"New Castle County in the last couple of years has seen an explosion of graffiti," he said. "Civic groups and residents are always concerned about the issue and I think this type of ordinance is probably the best we can do. We have to try and push back and show the public we're willing to do something."

Property Transfers

Limestone Acres: 4600 Springers Lane, Wilmington; Robert B. and Gary W. Frye to Donna R. Trincia; \$224,900.

Marshallton Heights: 3903 Chestnut St., Wilmington; Joseph and Jiewen Yan-McMullen to Crystal Rominger; \$259,900.

Newkirk Estates: 115 Darwin Drive, Newark; Patricia Sue Ottinger to Marzena Karas; \$170,000.

Newkirk Estates: 19 Phyllis Drive, Newark; Charles H. Mathena Jr. Etal to Rufus J. Mathena; \$33,200.

Sherwood Park II: 1121 Ipswitch Drive, Wilmington; Bruce D. and Linda K. I. Lonergan Etal to Richard K. Elliott; \$248,250.

The Hunt at Louviers: 26 Beagle Club Way, Newark; James D. and Margaret J. Goldschneider to Roberto A. and Stephanie D. Spoltore; \$430,000.

Woodmill: 5086 W. Woodmill Drive, Wilmington; Nicholas C. Nisky to Sarah M. Handlon; \$175,000.

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