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Editorial

Bipartisanship at its best for Media projects

While the race for the White House heats up around such issues as President George W. Bush's time served in the National Guard against Sen. John Kerry's Vietnam War record, local legislators are setting aside political differences to honor all Pennsylvania veterans.

U.S. Rep. Robert Brady (D-1) of Philadelphia made a rare appearance in Delaware County Monday along with U.S. Rep. Curt Weldon (R-7) of Thornbury for the unveiling of Pennsylvania Veterans Museum plans.

While it was prudent for both Brady and Weldon to show up in an election year, the cause they were supporting is indeed a worthy one.

Thanks to the efforts of Media Mayor Bob McMahon, a Democrat and a Vietnam veteran, the museum is slated to open at the old Media Armory on State Street by the end of the year.

The armory, which became a base for military operations in 1908 but is no longer a military facility, will undergo \$2.8 million

worth of renovations and expansion into a multi-leveled museum including a visitors' center, a sense-surround theatre and a shopping area.

And, McMahon says, that is only the beginning.

"We have 5,300 square feet right now. We want to double that to more than 10,000 square feet to do what we really want to do with the museum," said the Media mayor.

Rotating exhibits of some of the great battles from U.S. military history will be featured at the museum, starting with World War II's Battle of the Bulge.

Among other planned exhibits are ones focusing on the bombing of Iwo Jima during World War II, the Inchon invasion during the Korean War and the Tet Offensive during the Vietnam War.

These battles are expected to be brought to life through sights, sounds, smells, even weather conditions reproduced in the sense-surround theatre.

While Brady made a point of mention-

ing his buddy U.S. Rep. John Murtha (D-Pa.), a senior member of the military appropriations sub-committee, in terms of securing museum funding, it is local, county and state money that is responsible for the birth of the veterans museum.

And it is McMahon who made it happen.

Last year, Gov. Ed Rendell, a Democrat, delivered a state grant of \$1.3 million to refurbish the armory, the sum of which was matched from Media borough coffers.

Last November, \$200,000 more was provided for the veterans museum by the all-Republican Delaware County Council.

McMahon campaigned for the Media Armory state grant as vigorously as he campaigned for the \$700,000 state grant to help renovate the Media Theatre. In his role as both mayor and president of the Media Society for the Performing Arts, McMahon was also a key figure in purchasing the venerable theatre from real estate magnate Walter Strine Sr. for the borough.

Last June when Rendell presented both

the Media theater and armory grants to the borough, he focused on the importance of both projects.

"American music theater calms and soothes in difficult times. With the Media Theatre and the armory alive and well and working together, two cultural and historic landmarks will speak to generations to come, securing the place of United States' veterans and American music theater as important educational milestones for the youth of America in the Delaware County region," said the governor.

Being a veteran himself, it could be said McMahon has a vested interest in the Pennsylvania Veterans Museum becoming a reality. Being mayor of Media, winning the theater for the borough could be considered a plus in securing re-election.

But Bob McMahon has clearly risen above self-serving politics in gaining bipartisan support for projects that could well serve the community for many generations.

His uncompromised zeal is both commendable and refreshing.