

Rolling Thunder WI Chapter 4's "Rollin' for Tomah" run/walk event nets cash & much needed supplies for Tomah VA Hospital Veterans

By Mark "Wizard" Tilkens (10/9/09)

Sunday August 23rd was a perfect day with perfect weather for a nice 125 mile ride through the countryside. And what better way to spend it than a ride supporting the Veterans and helping to raise money for those Vets that are confined to a hospital. This was the first year of the "Rollin' For Tomah" event and the turnout was a little lighter than expected, despite the publicity, but the organizers and sponsor of the event, Rolling Thunder Chapter 4 of Central WI, hope it will become an annual event.



Chapter 4 WI President, Guy 'Pepper' Hartl states, "Events like this support part of Rolling Thunder's Mission which is to 'Help Veterans from all Wars'. The other part of the Mission is to 'Help Promote the Awareness of POW/MIA Issues'. This is also why we are thankful when we can partner with organizations that share our interests, like the American Legion, which helped us host this event"

Mark "Wizard" Tilkens, Past President of Rolling Thunder Chapter 3 of WI and current member of Chapter 4 explains the reasoning behind the event. "Many people do not realize that Veterans confined to VA hospitals get no extras with their care. That means they have to buy or get their own toiletries and personal items from the outside. Any snacks, coffee or other food items outside of their normal meals, or any recreation items such as movies, videos, music, games, books, magazines, etc. All of these things are their responsibility to get for themselves. There is a real need here that always seems to fall short of the demand." states Tilkens.



Event organizers estimated about 30 motorcycles started out on the 4-hour run from the American Legion in Wausau. Then they made stops at the VFW Halls in Colby and Medford, and Victory Lane in Merrill before returning to the American Legion for food, music and lots of door prizes and raffle drawings. There were also walkers and strollers that went on a shorter walk around the area and some cars also went on the motorcycle run. It was billed as a family event and several parents brought their kids to participate and have fun as well. Organizers are grateful to the many area businesses that were so generous in donating prizes for the event. Everyone that attended took home at least one door prize and two lucky raffle winners got a half pig, cut and wrapped to their specifications ...all donated by Dayland Meats of Athens, WI.

The "Rollin' For Tomah" event raised about \$2000 for the Vets which went to buy \$750 worth of food and personal supplies, with the remaining \$1,250 presented as check to help Vets with other personal and recreation needs. Boxes of books, tapes and clothing collected during the event were also donated. Tomah VA Officials were very grateful and hope this can continue each year. "Our Vets really deserve this support and they just never seem to get enough to fill the need," stated one Tomah VA Volunteer. "A big Thank You to Rolling Thunder Chapter 4 of WI, and all the businesses that help to make this generous donation possible."



A couple of pictures from a Hog Heaven ride this summer. I was not able to attend the ride, but I do recommend their Chicken tenders. Stop in and say hi the next time your in Appleton.



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