

PRESS RELEASE



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CHARLES H. COOLIDGE MEDAL OF HONOR HERITAGE CENTER ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR FUTURE LOCATION IN AQUARIUM PLAZA

*Letter of Intent to lease Visitors Center from River City plans for Feb. 2020 opening
and is contingent upon achieving fundraising benchmarks; Heritage Center
launches its capital campaign with Veteran Charter Membership Drive*

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (Aug. 3, 2017) – The Charles H. Coolidge Medal of Honor Heritage Center is pleased to announce today that the organization has signed a Letter of Intent with River City Company to build its new Heritage Center at the Visitors Center building in the Aquarium Plaza and plans to open in Feb. 2020, contingent upon achieving specific fundraising benchmarks. With this agreement, the Heritage Center officially begins its capital campaign by launching a Veteran Charter Membership drive to harness veteran support for the project.

“Today, we have taken an important step to making the Charles H. Coolidge Medal of Honor Heritage Center a reality for Chattanooga – a place that many view as the birthplace and home of our nation’s most treasured military honor, the Medal of Honor,” said Major General Bill Raines, U.S. Army (Retired) and chairman of the Charles H. Coolidge Medal of Honor Heritage Center.

Raines continued, “This effort is not about building a monument for the Medal of Honor. We envision the Heritage Center as a place that connects people with history through a first-class, immersive experience about these real heroes and their unreal stories. Most important, we envision the Heritage Center as a place that inspires our youth and educates them about the six character traits that all Medal of Honor recipients share – courage, commitment, sacrifice, patriotism, integrity and citizenship.”

Lieutenant General Charles H. Coolidge, Jr., U.S. Air Force (retired) and son of Medal of Honor recipient Charles H. Coolidge, expressed his excitement for the new location and said, “The Coolidge family fully supports the decision to build the new Heritage Center in the heart of downtown Chattanooga. This is an incredible opportunity to share the values embodied in the Medal of Honor with more than 900,000 people that go through the Aquarium Plaza every year. By doing this, we can inspire present and future

generations to look within themselves and ask how these six character traits can help them make a meaningful difference in their community.”

The Letter of Intent with River City Company entails two key benchmarks that the Heritage Center must achieve before signing a long-term lease for the Visitors Center building. The first benchmark requires the Heritage Center to raise \$1 million by the end of 2017. The Heritage Center has already raised nearly \$500,000 from its Board and expects to raise the remaining \$500,000 from the veteran community through its Veteran Charter Membership drive. For more information on purchasing a Veteran Charter Membership, please visit www.mohm.org/veterans.

“Hamilton County has more than 25,000 veterans, and their financial support is a critical piece to making this capital campaign successful,” said Colonel Frank Hughes, U.S.M.C. (Retired) and chairman of the Heritage Center’s capital campaign. “This is why we launched a new initiative where veterans, and those who wish to honor a veteran, can make a \$500 donation and become a Charter Member of the Heritage Center. While this effort started with the vision of a few veterans, we need all veterans in our area to support this effort so the Heritage Center can take the next step in building this lasting tribute to our nation’s greatest heroes.”

The second benchmark requires the Heritage Center to raise a cumulative \$3 million by the end of 2018. To reach this important goal, the Heritage Center has formed an extensive capital campaign committee composed of local and national veterans, community leaders and corporate executives. The committee will be chaired by the following:

National Campaign:

Lieutenant General Charles H. Coolidge, Jr., U.S. Air Force (Retired)
Vice President, Airbus Group

General B.B. Bell, U.S. Army (Retired)

Local/Statewide Campaign:

Colonel Frank Hughes, U.S.M.C. (Retired)
Executive Vice President, SmartBank

Joseph Decosimo, CPA
Senior Partner Emeritus, Elliott Davis Decosimo LLC

Major General Bill Raines, U.S. Army (Retired)
President and founder, The Raines Group

Chattanooga City Council Chairman Jerry Mitchell added, “I want to thank everyone who served on the Ad Hoc committee earlier this year, which recommended the Visitors Center as a consensus location for the new Heritage Center. I believe and support this location as it will ensure the Heritage Center

can move forward with a vision that embraces an important part of our city's heritage, honors those who have given so much to our country and inspires the next generation of Americans to become better citizens for our country."

In all, the Heritage Center expects to raise more than \$6 million – which includes a \$1 million endowment – to design and build a dynamic, state-of-the-art Heritage Center that will immerse visitors into the dramatic stories of Medal of Honor recipients, such as Desmond Doss, Charles Coolidge, Alvin York, Ray Duke, Paul Huff and Dr. Mary Walker – the only female to receive the Medal of Honor. Pending final negotiations with River City Company, the Heritage Center expects construction of the 19,000 square-foot facility to start in early 2019 with the official opening scheduled for 2020.

"As a veteran and as board chair for River City, we are pleased to be working with the Heritage Center team to bring this concept into a reality," said Tom Griscom, chairman of River City Company. "Chattanooga has a lot of history connected with the Medal of Honor and to have a Heritage Center that recognizes those who represent the best in our country would be a great addition to our cultural and historical heritage."

To learn more about the Charles H. Coolidge Medal of Honor Heritage Center or get more information about supporting its capital campaign, please visit www.mohm.org or call (423) 405-3677.

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