

History of San Benito Veterans War Memorial

Construction of this San Benito Veterans War Memorial has been a long journey for some members of our community. It was back in 1999 that some of our civic leaders gathered, and agreed that a memorial to honor our Veterans was needed, and that it should be constructed on this very site...where many young soldiers and sailors boarded the Missouri-Pacific train to take them into Military Service. It is also the site where some were returned in coffins to their families.



Former San Benito Assistant Police Chief Ovidio I. Gonzalez, former Fire Chief Armando Lucio, and Joe Hernandez, who is now our mayor, established a 20-person committee to begin the process of creating a concept, convincing officials and holding tight to their dream of building a fitting Memorial.

In the early 2000s, City Commissioner Joe H. Hernandez proposed that a Veterans Advisory Committee be appointed by the City Commission to further what was still only a dream. That committee met faithfully until on July 1, 2003, the City Commission approved the creation of a Veterans' Board.

On April 19, 2007, the San Benito Economic Development Corporation met and approved by resolution funding for construction of the San Benito Veterans War Memorial, along with several other projects, through the sale of Certificates of Obligation. Allocated for the project was \$350,000.

It was a long stretch of time, but the dream never died. A conceptual model of what the Veterans Board envisioned was constructed, and Veterans Board members were successful in soliciting the pro-bono services of Mata-Villarreal-Garcia Architects of McAllen, in agreeing to design the facility. In turn, the architects were successful in acquiring additional professional pro-bono services from some quality engineering companies to assist in the design phase of this structure.

Advertising for construction of the facility was finally conducted in early 2010, and the contract for construction was awarded to Garco Construction in the amount of \$411,244. Supplemental funding had to be found, and it came for the most part, from the interest generated from the COs.

San Benito has been successful in the realization of a dream, brought together by people from all walks of life who had the vision, love of Country and perseverance, to grow an idea from a seed into a beautiful facility that demonstrates our commitment and dedication to our people, especially those who have proudly served their Country.