

STATE PICKS UC VET CEMETERY LOCATION

This 93-acre property adjacent to I-40 in Cumberland County, TN has been identified as the potential site of a new Veterans Cemetery.

Posted Saturday, December 14, 2019: Herald-Citizen, Cookeville, TN
By Jim Herrin

The state of Tennessee has now identified a site in Cumberland County as a possible location of an Upper Cumberland State Veterans Cemetery.



The announcement Friday comes after years of work by members of a cemetery association which raised more than \$200,000 toward the effort to establish a cemetery in the region.

"We're excited to be able to share some positive news," said

Travis Murphy, assistant commissioner in the Tennessee Department of Veterans Affairs, at a meeting of the association Friday. "We have identified what we believe to be a suitable piece of property for a future ... cemetery."

He said the property is a 93.9-acre parcel on Cook Road in Cumberland County, visible from I-40 and easily accessed from the Genesis Road exit. The property is owned by Ricky Lynn Neely.

"We are thankful and appreciative that we've found a landowner that understands the importance of this project and has been willing to have some really positive conversations with us," Murphy said.

He said the next step in the process is for the Executive Subcommittee of the State Building Commission to approve the acquisition. That committee meets at 3:30 p.m. Monday, Dec. 16.

"Assuming that permission is granted, we would then look to get an option or contract in place on that property, and then do some due diligence in terms of the deed and some environmental studies to make sure the property is what it appears at face value," he said.

Murphy said the Cumberland County location helps to fill a gap in the location of veterans cemeteries nationwide.

"The National Cemetery Association's goal is that eligible veterans and their family members have a burial option in a state or federal cemetery within 75 miles of their home," he said, noting the current cemeteries in Knoxville, Nashville and Chattanooga don't meet that 75-mile distance for Upper Cumberland area veterans.

"If you draw a 75-mile circle around this spot, we clearly cover that remaining area," he said.

He anticipates that the closing of the property could take place in the next 90 to 120 days.

"Once the property has been acquired, we also have been appropriated funding to do the architecture and design work," he said. "Those are the two pieces that we need to formally submit a grant application to the federal VA's national cemetery administration."

The next meeting of the Upper Cumberland State Veterans Cemetery Association is scheduled for Feb. 7 at 10 a.m.

*Read more about the people and places in Putnam Co., TN & surrounding areas at:

<http://www.ajlambert.com>