

Land of Lincoln Honor Flight honors WBGZ

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ALTON - WBGZ, 94.3 FM/ 1570 AM, has been honored by the Land of Lincoln Honor Flight for its contributions to help send veterans to Washington, D.C.

Each Veterans Day for the last four years, former WBGZ Matinee Madness host Mike Montgomery has interviewed veterans who have made the day-long Honor Flight to Washington for a tour of war memorials and related sites. The trip, including all transportation and meals, is free for the veterans.

Thanks to the generosity of listeners, civic leaders and donors, the Veterans Day Pie Auctions have raised more than \$5,000 for the Honor Flights. The idea for the pie auction was proposed by Godfrey resident Lonnie Kimbro after he accompanied his brother, a Korean War vet, as a guardian on an Honor Flight. Kimbro continues to be very involved with the Big Z's Veterans Day program, raising money and helping Montgomery produce the show each year.

"The Veterans Day Pie Auction is one of my favorite days of the year on the Big Z, because not only are we helping a truly great cause, but thanks to Mike and Lonnie, we get to hear so many great stories from our local heroes. It's just a great reminder that the lives that we get to live often come with a steep price and that's something we should never forget," WBGZ General Manager Nick Darr said

Land of Lincoln Honor Flight is a nonprofit corporation, staffed by volunteers, that began in 2009. Since then, Land of Lincoln has staged 42 Honor Flights taking 3,215 veterans to Washington as well as a like number of guardians, usually one per veteran, who pay their own way and ensure the veteran's comfort and safety throughout the day. The average cost per veteran is about \$450 and that means to have six flights each year, the organization must raise nearly \$250,000.

Montgomery and Kimbro were in Springfield, IL, Saturday, March 25, to accept the certificate of appreciation for the radio station. Land of Lincoln Honor Flight President Joan Bortolon made the presentation at the group's annual meeting.

For more information about the organization or to make applications for a vet or to become a guardian, visit LandofLincolnHonorFlight.org.