

Eldred population swells from 300 to nearly 5,000 for Queen of Hearts drawing Tuesday

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ELDRED - Eldred is a small town with a population of 300 in Greene County, but the amount of people in town swelled to an estimated close to 5,000 on Tuesday night for the Eldred American Legion Queen of Hearts Drawing.

In Eldred's history, there has likely never been another event or series of events that collected as many people together as the Queen of Hearts. The winners of the Eldred American Legion Queen of Hearts drawing Tuesday night were Jeff and Amy Quigg of Murrayville.

The couple collected \$416,000 when the Queen of Hearts card was drawn. Eldred American Legion Commander Jon Baker said the drawings have been extraordinarily positive for the Legion and Eldred businesses.

“We couldn’t have put more people in Eldred,” Baker said about Tuesday night.

Baker said at one time, Eldred's American Legion post dipped to a low of 67 members.

“We are now on a roll with members,” he said. “We now have 103 members and are growing. Our Legion tries to support the cheerleaders, the Greene County Fair and other non-profit organizations. Our profits from this will help us do those things.

“Our bar staff has been overworked and underpaid and almost everyone outside the Legion is a volunteer. We can’t thank them all enough for their help, along with the police, the businesses and the townspeople for their understanding.”

In addition to Jeff and Amy Quigg’s winning ticket, some other Queen of Hearts winners on Tuesday were Brett Grosey, \$46,000; Haley Zirkelbach, \$1,000, Skip Gunning, \$500, Terry Wells, \$500, Justin Noble, \$500, Brittany Juhl, \$250 and Tony Kissenger, \$45. Frank Ingram won \$8,016 in the 50-50 drawing.

The Eldred Queen of Hearts drawing let people dream of what they would do with the \$400,000-plus top prize. Some went wild with their ticket purchases Tuesday, some upward of the \$1,000 to \$2,000 range, but most settled for 10 or 20 tickets for \$10 or \$20.

The majority smiled, saluted and were supportive that the Quigg's family won the big prize and know the money will go to good use, as they have five children, two in college and three in private school.

The Eldred Legion now will be able to make much-needed repairs and assist some non-profits they have been able to before. The businesses in Eldred are now flourishing after some difficult times in the past.

Amy Quigg said she was going to “invest, invest, invest,” and not “spend, spend and spend” the money, which was a good example for others who participated.

Baker said the next Eldred American Legion Queen of Hearts drawing will be at 7 p.m. Sept. 11. Already, the Legion has \$100,000 and Baker believes with pre-sales that number may rise to \$200,000.

“This is a win-win for us,” Baker said speaking for the Legion. “We greatly appreciate all the help we get.”