

Officials break ground on civil air patrol facility

By GREG JORDAN
Bluefield Daily Telegraph

BRUSHFORK — Ground was symbolically broken Tuesday for a modern home for an organization providing air search and rescue services in Mercer County.

The new headquarters for the Mercer County Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol was undergoing construction at the Mercer County Airport while

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Ready to build...

Adam Sarver, co-owner of Main Street Builders, and Civil Air Patrol Squadron Commander Maj. Danny Caldwell break ground for the Mercer County Composite Squadron of the Civil Air Patrol's new facility at the Mercer County Airport Tuesday.

Staff photo by
Eric DiNevo

Facility...

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the squadron's members and local dignitaries commemorated the new facility.

An all-volunteer force, the Civil Air Patrol saves an average of 80 lives a year, Jim Coiner, the squadron's public affairs officer told the guests.

"One of the most traditional roles is searching for downed aircraft," he said. "Over the last 20 or so years, our own Bluefield squadron has also found many crashed aircraft in southern West Virginia and occasionally we are even called in to help the CAP in Virginia. Sometimes the pilot and passengers survive the crash and other times they do not. We also help in a variety of other ways such as assisting in the war on drugs and fire patrol."

The squadron's commander, Maj. Danny Caldwell, said the local CAP's current home is two meeting rooms and an office inside the airport's hangar.

"Right now, it's inadequate," Caldwell said. "It's very small and we're on top of each other when we try to do any training. With this [new] building you're standing in right now, there will be a meeting room for cadets, restrooms, flight operations, a radio room, a kitchenette, our hanger, a supply room and four or five offices."

Emergency services were kept in mind when the new building was designed, Caldwell said. Backup generators will keep the facility running in case of a crisis.

"If we have to, we can spend the night here. Sometimes our missions keep us here for days," he added.

Coiner thanked Buzzy

Wilkinson and members of the Shott Foundation along with Will Stafford and the Hunnicutt Foundation for their support.

"In addition, most of our own CAP members have contributed money for this building along with many local citizens, organizations and businesses. One lady, for example, sent us \$50 in memory of her husband who was killed in World War II."

"In addition, we wish to thank the Mercer County Commission for their contributions along with the Airport Authority and the airport manager for making the land available for \$1 a year. Last but not least, we are very pleased that the Sarver brothers of Hometown Construction are building this facility for us," Coiner said.

The building was designed by E.T. Boggess Architects in Princeton.