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Editorial: Flag display planned for 9/11 observance

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The Herald-Dispatch

Huntington's Spring Hill Cemetery is a place of reverence any day of the year.

It dates back to the 1870s and includes the graves of Civil War veterans and the loved ones of generations of local families. Spring Hill also is home to a special memorial for those who died in the 1970 Marshall University plane crash.

But this September, the historic cemetery will another type of memorial -- thousands of American flags in a display called a "Healing Field."

The idea grew out of remembrances of the September 11th attacks in 2001 and spread across the country. This year's 10th anniversary will see similar Healing Fields erected in more than 40 communities across the country. Some communities -- such as Tempe, Ariz. -- have staged the event year after year.

Local organizers hope to have 3,000 American flags on several acres to honor veterans, first responders and others who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks. The event also will be a fundraiser to help the Huntington Parks and Recreation District build a bell tower, which will serve as a connector on the Paul Ambrose Trail for Health, which will link miles of pedestrian, cycling trails through area.

Ambrose, a Huntington-born doctor and public health advocate, died in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks when the plane he was aboard hit the Pentagon. The bell tower is planned near Ambrose's grave site.

The district will sell the 3-by-5-foot flags at \$35 a piece, some that will be part of larger sponsorships. The proceeds will be split evenly between Healing Field Foundation, which helps coordinate the events, and the Foundation for the Tri-State Community, which will manage the money raised for the bell tower.

The flags will be set up on Labor Day weekend and remain at the cemetery through Sept. 11. With just a month to go, now is the time for those interested in sponsorships or volunteer opportunities to contact the Park District at 304-696-5954 and help make the "Healing Field" happen.

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