

Trade union skills honor WWII veterans

Installation of two massive gun barrels from famous battleships Oct. 5 marked a milestone in the construction of the World War II Memorial on Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza.

Construction of the memorial, an effort spearheaded by Arizona Secretary of State Ken Bennett, relied heavily on volunteer labor provided by members of Phoenix-area trade unions.

“The IBEW and Ironworkers have been instrumental in the completion of the World War II Memorial in Phoenix,” said Bennett. “Union labor is the backbone of construction around the world, and we are proud to have the brotherhood work with us on this project. The patriotism shown by the members is second to none.”

Building concrete pedestals able to support the 70-ton guns once mounted on the USS Arizona and USS Missouri required the skills and experience of ironworkers from two locals.

“We feel privileged to be part of this as a community service project to honor our veterans,” said Troy Scoggins, training coordinator for Ironworkers Local 847.

The gun barrels point east toward downtown. Between them stand nine steel beams etched with the names of the more than 2,000 Arizonans who died in World War II.



The beams were designed, fabricated and erected by Schuff Steel and members of Ironworkers Local 75, who so far have spent more than 120 man-hours on the project, said Ken Finn, Arizona area field superintendent for Schuff Steel.

Seven members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 640 dug a trench longer than a football field and installed 400 feet of underground conduit that will supply power to the memorial lighting. More volunteers will install the lights later this month, said Roy Hamilton, business representative for IBEW Local 640.

The memorial is set to be dedicated Dec. 7. Bennett kickstarted the effort in 2011, raising more than \$300,000 in cash and approximately \$350,000 in in-kind donations to build the memorial on Wesley Bolin Memorial Plaza on the grounds of the Arizona State Capitol, which first required the transport and restoration of the guns.