

By JENNIFER NELSON OST news editor

## In celebration of Veteran's Day on Nov. 11

In celebration of Veteran's Day on Nov. 11, AmericInn Lodge and Suites of Osceola will be packing care packages to be shipped to troops deployed in Afghanistan, Iraq and other bases worldwide.

The local motel is joining others across the country in the effort.

AmericInn Manager Marlena Hewlett said the motel's corporate company convention had a similar care package project earlier this year.

"It was such a success they thought they'd try it at the individual property levels," said Hewlett.

The hotel is accepting items for the packages or monetary donations to cover the cost of postage until 2 p.m. Nov. 11 – which just happens to be 11/11/11.

Items may be dropped off at AmericInn or at Hy-Vee. People may also help donate their time by helping pack boxes, said Hewlett.

A freewill donation will be taken during the veteran's breakfast at HyVee on Nov. 11. Donations from this breakfast will go toward purchasing more items for the care packages and paying for postage. Hewlett will be at Hy-Vee to pick up any items dropped off.

Letters were sent out to local businesses and schools seeking donations. Word also got out through Osceola Chamber Main Street, so several individuals have donated items, as well, said Hewlett.

Each box will have the names of businesses that donated so the business receives recognition for their donation and the soldiers know who's supporting them.

"It has really given me a good feeling about our community – everybody has really stepped up and helped out," said Hewlett.

What is still needed

Hewlett said the motel has already received several personal care items for the packages but food items are still needed. Food items that will be accepted include: beef jerky, trail mix, hot chocolate/apple cider mix, Ramen/Cup of Noodles, breakfast bars, pop top stew, beef summer sausage, single size Gatorade, hard candy, gum, licorice, cookies, Little Debbie Snacks, Pop Tarts, individual size chips, pretzels, drink boxes, chocolate candy, pudding cups, nuts/sunflower seeds, power bars/granola bars, pop top or packets of tuna/chicken, Easy Mac and Cheese, pop top soups, single box cereals, Single size drink mix packets, fruit snacks/fruit cups, instant oatmeal packets, microwave popcorn. These items are not readily accessible during overseas military deployment.

Hewlett said other items that can be donated are crossword puzzle books, appropriate magazines, bandages, Q-tips, deodorant, shampoo, conditioner, small packages of unscented wet wipes, shaving cream, razors, small bottles of Tylenol/Advil, small Bibles, Ziploc bags (snack/sandwich size), small sports balls, individual facial tissue packs, notepads, envelopes, cards, small containers of hand sanitizer, food powder, devotional books, small paint brushes and playing cards/dice.

Packaging and shipping

Beginning at 2 p.m. Nov. 11 employees at AmericInn will be packaging the items to be shipped. Members of the community may also help.

AmericInn has partnered with the national Blue Stars Mothers organization for the project. Blue Stars is made up of mothers who have a child in the military. The mothers become a Gold Star Mother if they lose their son or daughter.

Blue Stars Mothers' Adel chapter will be sending some members to pick up the boxes. Hewlett said the organization will make sure the boxes are shipped to service men/women from Iowa.

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