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New veterans organization chartered

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BY JIM HERRIN

A new organization, intended to appeal to younger military veterans in the area, has been chartered in Cookeville.

Highland AMVETS Post 44 was organized after Jason Murphy, a veteran of the Air Force, was approached about starting a local chapter.

"I'm actually kind of sad to say that, even as a 20-year retired veteran of the U.S. Air Force, I didn't know anything about AMVETS. I'd never even heard of it. But someone approached me and let me know a little bit about the organization," he said. "I ended up talking to several different AMVETS people to find out more about how to start a local post, and learned that all I needed to do was find at least 10 new members."

So Murphy, who had spent part of his career as a recruiter for the Air Force, began looking for members.

"Recruiting is something I do well," he said. "I just went to work calling veteran friends and recruiting people. I ended up putting enough people together quickly and we have gone on to write our bylaws, and we were officially presented our charter this past Saturday."

The first official meeting of the newly chartered group is scheduled for Oct. 23. They will be meeting on the fourth Monday of the month at the Veterans Building at 90 E. Spring St.

"Our goal is to get to 40 members by the end of this month," Murphy said. "Several counties are involved. In fact, we already have members from Cumberland County, White County, Putnam and Overton."

He said the group is also looking to grow by adding Tennessee Tech students as members. The post's first vice commander, Kevin Flanary, is the veterans service officer for the university.

"Over 300 veterans are actively enrolled at Tennessee Tech University and he is the main (contact) to help all those veterans access their G.I. Bill benefits to help them go to college," Murphy said.

He said he hopes many of those students will join AMVETS.

"That's my goal and what sets Highland AMVETS apart from the other veterans organizations. We are specifically recruiting and targeting the younger veterans," Murphy said. "I want this to be the young veterans organization in Cookeville."

Murphy said the group is looking to assist veterans and to benefit the community as a whole.

"I have already applied for two grants. One is a community service grant where our local post now has \$1,000 on the way that we can spend to help the local community, either finding someone in need or assisting a community organization that helps those that are in need," he said. "We'll also have an additional \$1,000 specifically for veterans services."

For more information on the post, visit www.amvetspost44.com or call Murphy at 252-0201.

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