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Local Event Planned for USS Beloit Christening

June 8, 2022 - The stateline community is invited to celebrate the christening and launch of the USS Beloit with a special event featuring a video of the christening, music performances, and a chance to hear from World War II heroes and the ship's sponsor, retired Major General Marcia Anderson.

The free public event will be held from 5:30-7 p.m. at ABC Supply Stadium, 217 Shirland Ave, Beloit, on Tuesday, June 21, 2022. Gates will open at 4:30 p.m. Paid concessions will be available through the duration of the event. Thank you to ABC Supply Stadium for generously donating the space to the community for this celebration.

Free tickets to the event can be found on [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com). Eventbrite will email you a QR code that will be used to gain entrance to the event.

The United States Navy's littoral combat ship, the USS Beloit (LCS 29), was christened and launched in Marinette, Wisconsin, on May 7, 2022. The ship will undergo additional testing before being commissioned at a date to be determined.

The event will include the following:

- Introduction of the ship's sponsor, retired U.S. Army Major General Marcia Anderson, who has fond memories of spending her childhood in Beloit. She served our country with pride and became the first African-American woman to achieve the rank of Major General in the U.S. Army.
- Introduction of the four artists who created a challenge coin that will forever be in a box welded to the USS Beloit's mast. The four local artists, Abigail (Bea) Champeny-Johns, Miguel Ángel Olivera, Aaron Nilson and Tom West, all have ties to Beloit and to the military.
- Introduction of local World War II Veterans and 'Rosie-the-Riveters' who were honored in Marinette during the christening ceremony on May 7.
- Presentation of colors by a joint Honor Guard from the Rock County Sheriff's Office and the City of Beloit Police Department.
- Performances by Sara Lemen and the Jack Farina Orchestra
- Videos of the christening and launch and a viewing of the trailer for "Honor in the Heartland: The Story of the USS Beloit," a documentary about the construction and naming of the vessel that is being produced by Fairbanks Morse Defense (FMD).

"The City of Beloit thanks VetsRoll and Fairbanks Morse Defense for all they have done to support all events surrounding the USS Beloit," said Jen Hall, economic development director for the City of Beloit. "We look forward to celebrating this momentous occasion with the entire community."

VetsRoll offers trips to Washington, D.C., to senior Veterans who have served during armed conflicts. The trips provide these Veterans the closure, gratitude and respect they deserve. While COVID-19 has impacted the trips, the organization has found ways to honor Veterans, including through the USS Beloit christening.

"VetsRoll is honored to have been invited to participate in this landmark event for our City and for Fairbanks Defense," said Mark Finnegan, founder of VetsRoll. "Our mission is to continue honoring America's senior Veterans and 'Rosie-the-Riveters' and even though COVID sidelined our last three trips to DC, we are able to work on events such as this to continue providing the closure, gratitude and respect of the general public to the heroes that lived history in color and to let those same heroes know, the public will never forget what they have sacrificed and provided for all of us."

For several years, FMD executives have advocated for the U.S. Navy, one of the company's largest customers, to name a vessel after Beloit in recognition of the City's support of America's national security over the past century. FMD has provided products and services to the Navy for almost 100 years and powers more than 80% of the Navy's ship's with medium-speed applications.

In October 2018, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin announced that LCS 29 would be named the USS Beloit, and construction began at the Fincantieri Marinette Marine shipyard in July 2020. Fairbanks Morse Defense supplied the two diesel engines for the USS Beloit, as well as the diesel engines for all of the LCS Freedom-class ships currently in the Navy's fleet.

"FMD believes that every vessel and sailor in the U.S. fleet deserves our unwavering respect and support. The USS Beloit is particularly meaningful for us because it serves as an extraordinary recognition of the dedication and sacrifices made for our nation by the entire community," said FMD CEO George Whittier.

"The Beloit Sky Carp, and ABC Supply Stadium, are honored to serve as the host site for this historic celebration," says Beloit Sky Carp president, Zach Brockman. "This is what our stadium was built for, to bring the community together to celebrate moments such as this. We commend all who have been involved in this process and look forward to spending a truly special day with the community on June 21."

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