

## REGIONAL DISCUSSION ITEM

### **PURPLE HEART HIGHWAY INITIATIVE**

Charlotte County MPO had inquired of FDOT to install signs on I-75 in Charlotte County as a Purple Heart Friendly Community. FDOT policy is to limit extraneous sign messages or information on limited access facilities like I-75. However, designation of a State highway facility is an act of the legislature and has been done in many cases. Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO Board discussion has considered an initiative to designate all I-75 in Florida as a Purple Heart Highway.

Some background, in 1992 the Military Order of the Purple Heart, a national organization, established a program to identify a symbolic "Purple Heart Trail" throughout all 50 States, Puerto Rico and Guam. That has been accomplished. Florida has designated the "Purple Heart Memorial Highway" on I-75 from Ocala City limits to the Georgia State line. US 27 is designated a "Purple Heart Highway" essentially the length of the State. The designations of a transportation facility are an act of the Legislature, and erection of appropriate markers are contingent on appropriate city or county commissions passing a resolution in support of the honorary designation before FDOT installs signage.

An interesting study is the establishment of three Purple Heart Trails in the State of Texas. One is on I-35 from Laredo to Gainesville, Texas on the Red River. The second, I-40 across the Texas Panhandle, and the last I-37 from San Antonio to South Padre Island. The markers were designed, constructed and erected by TxDOT funded entirely by donations raised by San Antonio's Alamo Chapter 1836 of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. Texas Legislature was required to pass a Senate Bill designating these roadways which was signed into law by the governor of Texas. Donations for the signage was established so that the signs were spaced no greater than 100-mile intervals. For the I-40 and I-37 Interstate Highways the total donated for signage was \$25,211.

Charlotte County-Punta Gorda MPO is encouraging local county commissions to support making this a regional initiative of the legislature.

Discuss and Consider Passing this Initiative to the Respective Boards of County Commissioners Making this a Regional Initiative for the Legislature.

