

Front Royal 2382 Again Hosts Veterans to Skyline Drive Outings

As they have done each April and October since late 2015, Front Royal 2382 again hosted approximately 150 Veterans from the Martinsburg VA Hospital for a day full of sight-seeing and fine dining every Thursday in April.

Each Thursday morning during April 2017, buses from the Martinsburg VA Hospital arrived at the Front Royal Elks Lodge loaded with Veterans who were en route to a sightseeing tour of the Shenandoah National Park via Skyline Drive. At the lodge, they were greeted by a number of volunteers, served light refreshments, and also were met by several Park Service personnel who offered free lifetime passes to all U.S. Parks. After their stopover at the lodge, these guests again boarded their buses and departed for a two-hour tour of the scenic Skyline Drive, which is especially beautiful during the April Spring green-up.



Following this tour, the Veterans returned to the Elks Lodge where they were treated to a delicious luncheon. The luncheons were all prepared and served by volunteers from the lodge. Also assisting with the serving were several members of the local VFW. The meals truly cap off a most memorable day for these Veterans. Plus, with close coordination between the Hospital staff and the Elks Veterans Committee, the cooks always have a good approximation of the number of guests coming and have sufficient food prepared to provide seconds, and in some cases even third helpings of these bountiful meals!



A number of local organizations take an active role in making certain that these very popular events are successful. In addition to the Elks, members of the local VFW Post (which originally started this program many years ago, but lost their Post Home to a fire in the summer of 2015), the aforementioned U.S. Park Service, the Front Royal Police Department (providing escorts as the guests' buses depart Front Royal), as well as the Mayor of Front Royal, Hollis Tharpe, also a member of Lodge 2382, who tries to attend each of these luncheons and not only assists with serving the meals but sits and has lunch with the guests.



We've been told that the informal word-of-mouth communications in the halls of the Martinsburg VA hospital is that...."If you are looking for a great day, and especially a wonderful meal....don't miss one of those Elks-sponsored trips to Skyline Drive".

That pretty much sums it up. Next trips are scheduled for each Thursday in October 2017.