

Vets have true values in happiest U.S. state

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
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Lt. Gov. Sheehy thanks veterans, families for sacrifices past, now.

Nebraska's lieutenant governor is happy he lives in Nebraska.

During the opening of a speech to veterans on Nov. 11, Rick Sheehy talked about an encounter with Good Morning America television journalists who visited Hastings after Nebraska was declared the happiest state in the country.

“They didn’t want to go to Lincoln or Omaha, they wanted to see cows, pigs and corn,” Sheehy said of their visit last spring. “But the corn wasn’t up yet.”

The journalists interviewed Sheehy, business people and the mayor of Hastings and left. When the story aired, Sheehy was en route to Lincoln but called his wife who said the interviewees did a good job of representing Hastings.

“The mayor and business people made it (on the air) but not me,” he said with a laugh.

The Cornhusker State was named the happiest because of low unemployment rates, fewer home mortgage foreclosures and personal income compared to debt, Sheehy said.

“Why I talk about the happiest state is because of the people,” he said. “I get a warm reception wherever I go because of people like you here tonight who hold true values.”

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Veterans in Nebraska play a major role that “we are learning is more and more important.”



Sheehy then read Governor Dave Heineman’s proclamation of Veterans Day recognizing the service of more than 165,000 Nebraska veterans.

The proclamation encouraged Nebraskans to remember the service and sacrifice of the nation’s veterans and military personnel.

“I thank you for your service and the legacy passed to those serving today,” he said. “I’m here tonight to honor each of you and personally express thanks of your willingness to defend freedom and protect our way of life.”

He noted that the work of veterans’ organizations is another part of the legacy of those who put themselves in harm’s way.

Sheehy gave special thanks to the Patriot Guard riders and soldiers deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Describing Veterans Day as one set aside to pause and honor men and women who sacrifice much, he said the faces of veterans have changed from those who served in World War II to those stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“We’ll continue to provide support,” Sheehy said.

The lieutenant governor encouraged the audience to remember not only those who lost their

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lives fighting for freedom but also the 12 soldiers slain by an Army psychiatrist on Nov. 5 at Ft. Hood, TX.

“Freedom isn’t free. It’s a gift,” he said.

Even though men and women are killed in the name of freedom, Sheehy said that doesn’t make enduring loss any easier.

Sheehy thanked family members, noting that family left behind need additional support as they deal with daily pressures when spouses, sons and daughters are deployed.

He also encouraged veterans to tell their stories.

“Write them down, share them with a young child,” Sheehy said, noting that world peace may be attainable if those stories are told. “Hopefully our children will grow up in a different world.”

Sheehy spoke at the annual Veterans Day banquet at the Senior Center where local singer Mary Streeter provided music and veterans were recognized.

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