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Monument to be dismantled, moved

Should be at new location by end of July

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Star Beacon

GENEVA — The city's treasured Civil War Soldiers and Sailors Monument soon will take a ride to its new location at South Broadway and Park Street.

City council on Monday night accepted the bid of Ameriseal and Restoration, an Akron company, to relocate the monument. City Manager Jim Pearson said Ameriseal had the lowest bid: \$28,300. The highest of the four bids received was around \$51,000. Pearson said the monument will be moved next month.

Ameriseal will dismantle the monument and reconstruct it as the centerpiece of a new memorial park. Pearson said the move should be completed by the end of July. A concrete pad already has been poured at the new park and needs to cure for 30 days before it can receive the weight of the monument.

The move will be the second for the monument, originally dedicated Aug. 4, 1880, at a location in the middle of town. The coming of automobiles to Geneva necessitated moving the monument to accommodate the speedy traffic in the downtown square. It went to South Eagle and Parks streets at that time.

The monument has a bit of national history behind it. When it was dedicated more than 130 years ago, three presidents — James A. Garfield, Benjamin Harrison and William McKinley — spoke at the dedication.

Pearson said the monument's new location once again will put it in the public eye as it rises on the city-owned park, formerly the site of a gas station.

The relocation is being funded by a variety of sources, including the city's revolving loan fund, but the effort has been driven by volunteers and donations. Major contributors include the Geneva Eagles Aerie and the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Pearson said VFW recently donated the money to erect flagpoles in the park. The U.S., state and prisoner of war flags, as well as flags from each branch of the military, will fly on the poles, which cost \$1,000 each. Pearson said there is also a plan to do a big Purple Heart in flowers, which will catch the attention of visitors as they come into town.

“It's going to look real nice,” Pearson said of the park.

The park and monument relocation are part of a larger \$1.3 million downtown revitalization project. About a quarter of the money is coming from a community development block grant. The project includes the county's shortest covered bridge.