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Community Rallies to Meet Essex Foundation Matching Gift Challenge to Support Local Veterans *\$100,000 Awarded for Expansion and Renovation of Essex Veterans Memorial Hall*

Essex, CT – Thanks to a tremendous outpouring of community support it took just six months to reach the \$100,000 goal to fund the Essex Veterans Memorial Hall's expansion and renovation project. In September, The Essex Foundation announced a matching gift challenge where every dollar up to \$50,000 donated by community members, groups, and businesses would be matched 100% by the Foundation to help Hall members in their efforts to welcome more community members and better serve their needs. Community contributions hit the \$50,000 mark in March, triggering the Foundation's \$50,000 match and a celebratory check presentation at the Centerbrook site on April 13. "I am overwhelmed by the generosity and the number of individuals who contributed to this cause," commented Bruce Glowac, President of The Essex Foundation Board of Directors, "Thank you to all for once again demonstrating what wonderful communities we live in."

Construction planning and work, overseen by House Committee Chair Paul Knudsen, will now move forward, and includes enlarging and renovating the kitchen, adding a new porch and outdoor dining area, installing a new roof and ADA accessible ramp, and updating the meeting room interior. Hall members will provide most of the volunteer labor while the \$100,000 award will be used to cover the cost of equipment, materials, and specialized labor. Hall President Art Davies, speaking on behalf of all members, stated, "Our heartfelt thanks to



the Essex Foundation for spearheading this expansion of our Vets Club, only with its matching funds could have achieved this goal. The Foundation has been a true friend to our veterans and this community over the years, and for that we are grateful. Many thanks to all who donated, large and small, to help us reach our goal. We look forward to meeting you in the future...our doors are always open."

Essex Veterans Memorial Hall is the last known stand-alone, 501(c)(19) nonprofit veterans' organization on the East Coast. After World War II the Town of Essex conveyed the Centerbrook

Schoolhouse to the group for \$1 with the stipulation that the organization remain intact and take full responsibility for maintaining the building. Located at 3 Westbrook Road in the Centerbrook, it now serves as a resource for 180 members, their families, and the greater community. Other nonprofit groups use the Hall free of charge for meetings and activities. Non-members can rent the space for special events and celebrations. With recent renovations, parking lot improvements, and the installation of a stand-by generator, also supported by grants from The Essex Foundation, the Hall can also be used as a community comfort station during storm-related power outages.

Pictured Above : Members of The Essex Foundation Board and Essex Veterans Memorial Hall share a celebratory moment after the presentation of a \$100,000 gift to the Hall funded by community donations that were matched by the Foundation.