

Opinion

MIROP Monday, June 1, 2009 A5

West side pride marches on

Just two years ago, the survival of South Bend's West Side Memorial Day Parade was in doubt.

These days, there's no doubt about it: The important local tradition isn't merely surviving, it's thriving. This year's parade featured more than 120 entries, the largest in the past three years. All the essentials were there — veteran's groups, marching bands, youth sports teams, fire trucks, horses, you name it.

Given the significance of the holiday and this year's theme of "Let Us Not Forget," we were particularly struck by the story of the eight military veterans, all residents of the Center for the Homeless, who marched this year. According to a Tribune report by Joseph Dits, the group was organized by former St. Joseph Superior Court Judge Robert L. Miller Sr., a retired lieutenant commander in the U.S. Naval Reserves who served in World War II and the Korean War. Miller is looking to expand the group, which he's dubbed "Miller's Vets," reaching out to homeless veterans in other shelters and agencies.

Because members of this community pitched in to help keep the parade going, there is a very special place for marchers like Miller's Vets. In its 86th year, the parade offers a vivid example of a community that hasn't forgotten.