

By Jan Rahn

Managing Editor

The 54th annual observance

of Veterans Day is set for Thursday Nov. 11, hosted by American Legion Post No. 271 of Madrid.

The morning begins at 10 a.m. with a parade of veterans down Central Avenue followed by the Perkins County High School band under the direction of Sheila Johnson.

A program will follow at the high school that includes posting of colors, invocation by veteran Rev. Ron Krause of Zion Lutheran Church, and band selections.

Welcoming remarks will be made by Perkins County American Legion Commander Karl Dudo who will introduce post commanders.

Auxiliary president Pat Heinemann will introduce the 2010 Boys and Girls Staters.

Guest speaker for this year's Veteran's Day observance is Gerry Pankonin.

A free ham and bean feed will be held at the American Legion Hall in Grant sponsored by the Madrid, Grant, Venango and Elsie legions and the Perkins County Veterans of Foreign Wars. The beans for the feed are donated by Trinidad Bean Company.

Biography of Speaker

Gerry Pankonin has lived in Perkins County most of her life where she attended country grade school and graduated in 1939 from Perkins County High School.

She has been married to Elmer Pankonin since November 1941. The couple's children include sons Larry and Leon who farm in the county. In 1978 they lost their daughter, Linda, a registered nurse, in a tragic tractor-car accident.

Pankonin worked at the A.S.C. office in Imperial for two years and was employed at Sullivan/Aten Department Store in Grant for 30 years.

She served as a member of the Grant Planning Commission and the Grant Cemetery Board.

For 30 years, she taught pre-school Sunday School at Zion Lutheran Church.

Since the age of 18, through her father's honor, she has been a member of the American Legion Auxiliary and V.F.W. She is a member of Sawyer Club.

"Veterans and servicemen and women are special to me since daddy was in World War I," said Pankonin. Her husband Elmer was in World War II, and her brother, two brothers-in-law and two grandsons have also served.

"Patriotism is my number one interest," Pankonin said.

With the blessing of the American Legion Auxiliary, she started "Avenue of Flags" at the local

cemetery in 1984. There are now 182 flags.