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Union sending season's greetings

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Staff Writer
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A local tobacco workers' union is celebrating the holidays by extending thanks to military servicemen and women overseas.

Local 192T, the Reidsville chapter of the Bakery, Confectionary, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union, has gathered the names of 3,500 soldiers currently serving in Iraq, and is in the process of sending Christmas cards to as many as possible.

Rick Shreve, a machine operator at Commonwealth Brands in Reidsville, is organizing the drive. Shreve, the financial secretary for Local 192T, says the idea was an easy sell to his fellow union members.

"I told them 'you don't have to support the war, but I think we should support the soldiers,' and that's all it took," Shreve said.

Working with anysoldier.com, a Maryland-based non-profit organization designed by Army veteran Marty Horn, Shreve collected the soldiers' names and distributed them among the union's 135 local members.

They plan to send the cards on Dec. 1.

"They might be a little late, but what's important is that the troops know we're thinking about them," Shreve said.

Shreve wants to get the community involved as well.

Together with his wife Tracy, he's distributing names and addresses of soldiers to anyone who wants to send a card.

They'll supply the contact information, but are asking that participants supply their own cards and postage.

The project is one of two the union is currently working on - Shreve is helping Local 192T organize a food drive, which began Monday, to aid those in need this holiday season.

He's using the holiday season to rally the public behind those facing many kinds of struggles.

"We've done [the food drive], but I'm trying to have it every year," said

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Shreve. "It's that time of year when generosity is at a peak."

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