

# The Navigator

## Waukesha County Veterans' Services

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### FEDERAL, STATE & LOCAL BENEFITS UPDATE

#### NEWS UPDATE FOR FEDERAL BENEFITS



### New “Wounded Warrior” Benefits Approved

The following information was from the Army Times

December 24, 2007—A sweeping reform bill aimed at helping combat-injured troops and their families includes some major policy changes but leaves many details to be determined by defense and veterans' officials.

The Wounded Warrior Act, a self-contained section of the 2008 defense authorization bill, calls for improving the treatment of combat-injured service members in terms of medical care, benefits and the transition from the military to veterans health care systems.

Key provisions include:

- ◆ An automatic five years of post-combat care in Veterans Affairs Department hospitals without requiring troops to prove service-connected causes for their medical issues. The existing time limit is two years.
- ◆ A big boost in separation payments for people with low-rated disabilities who are unable to continue military service. The minimum would be 12 months of basic pay for someone separated for a combat-related disability, and six months for those with non-combat disabilities.
- ◆ Creation of a Wounded Warrior Resource Center, an enhanced version of information hubs, already formed by the services, that serve as one-stop shops for answers to questions about health care and benefits, and to report problems.
- ◆ Retroactive review of thousands of disability-related separations of combat troops to determine whether they were treated fairly, and expanded availability of mental health services.
- ◆ Expanded mental health counseling, including a requirement that any veteran who seeks help must get a mental health exam within 30 days.

- ◆ Better benefits for family members who care for wounded service members, including up to 26 weeks of unpaid leave from a private-sector job for spouses, parents, siblings or children who care for disabled veterans - as well as the possibility of receiving space-available medical care from military and VA facilities, and job placement help for those who serve as regular caregivers for hospitalized troops and veterans.

Meredith Beck, national policy director of the nonprofit Wounded Warrior Project, said she has no qualms about leaving some of the specifics to be worked out by the Pentagon and VA, as they are most responsible for working with patients and their families.

She praised both Democrats and Republicans in Congress, the Bush White House and the Pentagon for working together on a bipartisan agreement despite an increasingly partisan political climate.

Disabled veterans "should not be the subject of political debate," she said. "It should be in everyone's interest to take care of them."

Rep. Ike Skelton, D-Mo., House Armed Services Committee chairman, called the Wounded Warrior package a response by Congress to the "outrage" over reports earlier this year about inadequate treatment of outpatients at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., which led to even wider complaints about problems combat-disabled service members have with the bureaucracy.

Although the bill is short on specifics, Skelton and Rep. Bob Filner, D-CA., House Veterans' Affairs Committee chairman, pledged more legislation in the future and said Congress will be watching as policies take shape in the Pentagon and VA.

*(Continued on page 12 - Wounded Warrior)*

**COMMENTARY CORNER** By: **John L. Margowski, Director**

Happy New Year! 2008 might prove to be a very interesting year with veterans' issues. Many of the Congressionally mandated Commissions and Panels have turned in their reports to Congress or published them. They covered many aspects of veterans' service member issues ranging from combining the out processing military physical with the initial VA exam to recommendations on how to make improvements in the total VA claims processing system to totally revamping the way the VA does business.

Veterans and their supporters will need to maintain good vigilance to ensure that any changes made will be of a positive nature. Currently, the claims processing is again getting longer and longer. Wait times at the hospital are again increasing for Primary Care appointments.

February 19<sup>th</sup>, is the Wisconsin Primary Election. Remember, veterans vote, so go to the polls and take a friend or neighbor. Another opportunity to voice your opinion is the annual Wisconsin

Veterans' Salute to the Legislature. The event takes place February 20th at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center, Exhibition Hall A, One John Nolen Drive, Madison WI. The event starts with a Department of Veterans Affairs Stakeholders' Conference starting at 12 Noon to 5 P.M. Then the reception is at 5 P.M. during which you can talk directly with your state legislators. Waukesha County is close enough that we should have a lot of veterans there.

I again offer you the opportunity to send your post public activities, such as fish fry and bingo dates, to us for inclusion in our calendar of events on our web page. We get lots of visitors to our web page and this is free advertising for your activities. I am also available to come to your posts to discuss any veterans program for which you would like information. I have a Power Point presentation that lasts about 30 to 40 minutes, then take time for questions or I can tailor a presentation to your specific topic. Get together with another post, include the auxiliary, advertise in your local paper and open it up to the veterans in your community, whatever format will best fit your needs. If you invite the public, you can probably get credit for a post public service project.

Do you have a service connected disability? Has that condition worsened? Do you now

have medical conditions secondary to your service connected disability? Call my office at 262-548-7732 and set up an appointment to discuss reopening your disability claim for re-evaluation and increased compensation for your disabilities.



Have you enrolled for VA Health care? For non-service connected veterans the income limit for enrollment for single veterans in Waukesha County is \$37,650, a married veteran with a spouse, the limit is \$43,000. The income limits are based on the last calendar years' income. If you are below those limits, you should take advantage of this benefit. If you have service connected disabilities, you are entitled to all medical care for your disability. If you were exposed to Agent Orange from your service in Vietnam, for example, these income limits do not apply. If you would like more information, please call my office at 262-548-7732.

Lastly, post representatives please call in your new officers and indicate a correct e-mail to which we can electronically send this newsletter to save on postage and staff time in preparing the mailings. If you absolutely do not have an e-mail address, then indicate to whom in your post you want the newsletter sent via snail mail. By the way, it can be viewed electronically on our Web Page.

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*If you have any questions or comments about the contents of the newsletter, please contact Waukesha County Veterans' Service Office at 262-548-7732.*

## Watch Your Weight Keep up Physical Activity VA Continuing Diabetes Education Drive

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON – Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Gordon H. Mansfield said today the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) plans to expand its efforts to prevent and control diabetes as part of an ongoing campaign to help veterans eat healthy, watch their weight and stay physically active.

“With over 25 percent of VA patients living with diabetes, it is important to find ways to bring this disease under control,” said Mansfield. “VA is doing more than ever to educate our veterans, research this disease and provide the type of specialized care that diabetes demands.”

Mansfield noted the Department has provided diabetic care to 70,000 veterans in more than 200,000 hospital and clinic visits since 2005.

Mansfield said VA plans to keep expanding its diabetes awareness effort as part of the Department’s broader HealthierUS Veterans campaign. Last year, television stations around the nation aired more than 3,000 VA-produced broadcasts about eating healthy and staying active. The Department held a symposium for health care professionals in Washington, D.C., and several public events around the country to inform veterans of the dangers of diabetes.

Annual evaluations of veterans with diabetes show small but continuing improvements in tested levels of blood sugar, LDL cholesterol and blood pressure with treatment, including weight management.

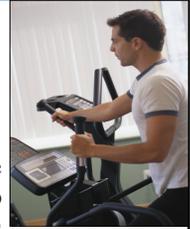
VA’s tele-health program allows patients with diabetes to

monitor and transmit their blood pressure and blood glucose levels from home to VA facilities, thus improving their access to care and allowing them to take control of their own health through improved communication from home with their health care providers.

VA’s research programs include centers investigating insulin resistance, vascular damage and obesity, pre-clinical studies of new agents to prevent and treat diabetes and clinical trials of new ways to prevent kidney damage.

Other VA research is seeking ways to reduce diabetes complications that lead to disability, focusing on preventing loss of limbs and avoiding obesity among paraplegic patients likely to gain weight due to reduced movement. VA researchers also are examining the interplay between genetics and the environment in determining glucose metabolism and weight gain or loss.

Some veterans with diabetes qualify for VA disability compensation. Those veterans must have a diagnosis of diabetes and evidence that it began or was aggravated during active duty or within one year of release from duty. Since 2001, veterans who served in Vietnam and later developed adult-onset (Type 2) diabetes have been eligible for disability compensation. This policy affecting Vietnam veterans is an outgrowth of research into the effects of Agent Orange.



## Peake Sworn in as VA Secretary, New Leader Pledges to Look to the Future

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (December 20, 2007) - In a ceremony today Dr. James B. Peake, a combat veteran of the Vietnam War and former Army Surgeon General, was sworn in by President George W. Bush as the nation's sixth Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

"Dr. Peake takes office at a critical moment in the history of this Department," said President Bush. "Our nation is at war - and many new veterans are leaving the battlefield and entering the VA system. This system provides our veterans with the finest care - but the bureaucracy can be difficult to navigate."

Secretary Peake stressed his commitment to easing the transition of our current generation of returning, combat experienced men and women and of "the opportunity to look to the future of this newest generation of combat veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan - getting it right for them and for their families."

Peake, who retired in 2004 as a three-star general, is a board-certified thoracic surgeon. His commands included the U.S. Army Medical Command, headquartered at Ft. Sam Hous-

ton, Texas; Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Wash.; the 44th Medical Brigade at Fort Bragg, N.C.; and the 18th Medical Command in Seoul, South Korea.

Secretary Peake told those assembled, "You need to know that I believe deeply in the mission; and that I believe in you. I know quite a number of you already. I've seen the ethic, the caring, the compassion, and the technical skills."

A native of St. Louis and graduate of the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Peake attended medical school after serving in Vietnam, where he earned the Silver Star and Purple Heart.

As Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Peake assumes leadership of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the second largest cabinet department, with about 250,000 employees and a budget last year exceeding \$82 billion.

More than 5.5 million veterans are expected to receive care this year in VA's 153 hospitals and 900 clinics. VA also provides disability compensation and pensions to 3.5 million veterans and family members, and operates 125 national cemeteries.

## VA's Suicide Hot Line Begins Operations Nicholson "Help a Phone Call Away"

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON - To ensure veterans with emotional crises have round-the-clock access to trained professionals, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun operation of a national suicide prevention hot line for veterans.

"Veterans need to know these VA professionals are literally a phone call away," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson said. "All service members who experience the stresses of combat can have wounds on their minds as well as their bodies. Veterans should see mental health services as another benefit they have earned, which the men and women of VA are honored to provide."

The toll-free hot line number is 1-800-273-TALK (8255). VA's hot line will be staffed by mental health professionals in Canandaigua, N.Y. They will take toll-free calls from across the country and work closely with local VA mental health providers to help callers.

To operate the national hot line, VA is partnering with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

"The hot line will put veterans in touch - any time of the day or night, any day of the week, from anywhere in the country - with trained, caring professionals who can help," added Nicholson. "This is another example of the VA's commitment to provide world-class health care for our nation's veterans, especially combat veterans newly returned from Iraq and Afghanistan."

The suicide hot line is among several enhancements to mental health care that Nicholson has announced this year. In mid July, the Department's top mental health professionals convened in the Washington, D.C., area to review the services provided to veterans of the Global War on Terror.

VA is the largest provider of mental health care in the nation. This year, the Department will spend about \$3 billion for mental health. More than 9,000 mental health professionals, backed up by primary care physicians and other health professionals in every VA medical center and outpatient clinic, provide mental health care to about 1 million veterans each year.

## Minneapolis VA to Open Clinic in Rice Lake, WI

The following information is from WDVA Media Relations [WDVA.Media.Relations@dva.state.wi.us](mailto:WDVA.Media.Relations@dva.state.wi.us)

MINNEAPOLIS – As part of a national effort to provide health care closer to where more veterans live, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Minneapolis will open a community based outpatient clinic (CBOC) Sept. 26 in Rice Lake, WI.

The CBOC will serve veterans from six Wisconsin counties (Barron, Burnett, Polk, Rusk, Sawyer and Washburn). An estimated 17,000 veterans live in the region.

The new clinic, located in recently renovated space at 2700A College Drive, will provide primary and preventative care, mental health services as well as continuing care for chronic diseases such as diabetes.

"By opening a CBOC in Rice Lake, we will improve access and make it easier for veterans to receive care by reducing their travel time," said Michael Koopmeiners, MD, Medical Director of the CBOC program, at the Minneapolis VA Medical Center. "Besides better access, it will be easier to follow-up on patients who need continuing medical attention."

The clinic will be operated by medical staff contracted by the VA. The staff will include physicians, nurse practitioners and nurses. The clinic will be open Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Initially, there will be no provider on Friday afternoons. As the clinic grows, additional staff will be added to accommodate the needs of the local veterans.

Before veterans can receive care at the facility, they must be enrolled

and registered with the Minneapolis VA Medical Center (VAMC). Veterans who are not yet registered should call (612) 467-2071. Veterans who are currently enrolled at Minneapolis VAMC should call (612) 467-1100 and request transfer of their primary care to the new clinic in Rice Lake.

In 2006, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announced plans to open 25 new community-based clinics in 17 states and American Samoa. There are currently more than 700 CBOCs in the country.

A CBOC opened in Hayward, WI, on June 4. The Hayward clinic was designed to be open 2-3 days per week. However, based on the number of veterans using this facility, the clinic has expanded its hours to 5 days per week to meet this demand. As long as the demand continues, the Hayward CBOC will continue to operate on this expanded schedule.

Both the Hayward and Rice Lake clinics will be managed by the Minneapolis VAMC through a contractual agreement with Corporate Health & Wellness, Inc., of Paris, Kentucky. The clinics expect a combined enrollment of 1700 patients.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**  
Ralph Heussner, Public Affairs Officer  
Minneapolis VA Medical Center  
(612) 467-3012

## VA Brings Mental Health Programs to Primary Care Settings

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (July 16, 2007) -- Addressing a special mental health forum with the top clinicians and researchers from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson announced plans to begin locating some of the Department's mental health programs closer to places where primary care is provided.

"Given the reluctance of some veterans to talk about emotional problems, increasing our mental health presence in primary care settings will give veterans a familiar venue in which to receive care -- without actually going to an identified mental health clinic," he said.

Nicholson described VA as "a long-standing leader in mental health," with \$3 billion devoted this year to mental health services. The Department has the nation's largest mental health program and is internationally recognized for research and treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

"The wounds of war are not always the result of explosions and rocket fire," he added. "They can sometimes be unseen and cloaked in silence. If left untreated, they can be just as lethal."

"We let veterans know that mental health issues and other military-related readjustment problems are not their fault -- that we can help them -- and that they can get better," he added.

Acknowledging that VA officials expect to see increasing

numbers of newly returned combat veterans with PTSD and other mental health issues, Nicholson said mental health care is currently provided at each of VA's 153 medical centers and 882 outpatient clinics.

Nicholson also announced plans to begin a series of regional conferences about providing mental health care to veterans with "our partners at the state, local and community levels."

Recent expansion of the Department's mental health services include:

- ◆ Greater availability of "telemental health" programs, which treated about 20,000 patients last year;
- ◆ Integrating mental health services into geriatric programs;
- ◆ Adding psychologists and social workers to the staffs of VA's polytrauma centers;
- ◆ Increasing the number of Vet Centers from 209 to 232, and adding 100 new combat veterans to run outreach programs to their former comrades.

"As the newest generation of combat veterans returns home, we want to ensure that we are providing them the very best in mental health care and treatment possible. They deserve nothing less," Nicholson said.

## VA Researchers Develop New Prosthetic Ankle

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (July 23, 2007) - Veterans with lower-leg amputations can look forward to having a prosthetic ankle-foot that matches their natural ease of motion, thanks to research funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and conducted by researchers from the Department and two of the nation's top universities.

"Veterans are entitled to the best this nation has to offer, and at VA, we're constantly redefining the meaning of best," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. "This new ankle-foot prosthetic is

another example of VA's medical innovations for veterans that will benefit all Americans."

Researchers say the new ankle-foot prosthetic is the first in a new family of artificial limbs. It will replicate natural motion by propelling people forward using tendon-like springs powered by an electric motor.

Through VA-funded research, the Center for Restorative and Regenerative Medicine, a partnership between the Providence VA Medical Center in Rhode

Island, Brown University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, developed the new prosthesis. The center's goal is to restore natural function to amputees.

VA expects to spend more than \$1.2 billion this year on prosthetics and sensory aids, which includes glasses and hearing aids. The Department operates about 60 orthotic-prosthetic labs across the country that fabricate, fit and repair artificial limbs or oversee limbs provided by commercial vendors.

## VA Secretary Announces Resignation

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (July 17, 2007) -- Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Jim Nicholson announced today he has tendered his resignation to President George W. Bush, effective no later than October 1, 2007.

Under Nicholson's leadership, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) continued its evolution as a leader in health care innovations, medical research, education services, home loan and other benefits to veterans.

He transformed the VA health care system to meet the unique medical requirements of the returning combatants from Iraq and Afghanistan.

In his letter of resignation, Nicholson praised and thanked the President for the honor of serving him and our Nation's veterans in this key post at such a "critical time in our nation's global war on terror."

"The VA is a dynamic organization dedicated to serving our nation's finest citizens - our veterans," Nicholson said. "It has been an honor and privilege to lead the VA during this historic time for our men and women who have worn the uniform. We have accomplished so much and the VA is always striving to improve our services to veterans."

Nicholson said he wants to return to the private sector. "This coming February, I turn 70 years old, and I feel it is time for me to get back into business, while I still can." He said he has no definite plans at this time.

He also addressed an assembled group of Washington VA employees and those watching around the country on VA's closed-circuit television. In his message to employees, Nicholson told them how privileged he felt to have worked with them in fulfilling our nation's promises and obligations to its veterans.

"VA has come a long way in meeting the growing needs and expectations of our veterans and you deserve the credit", Nicholson said.

Nicholson, a Vietnam Veteran, was sworn in as Secretary of Veterans Affairs on February 1, 2005.

During Secretary Nicholson's tenure at the Department of Veterans Affairs:

- ◆ Directed each of our veterans of the global war on terror who come to the VA for any kind of care to be carefully screened for brain damage (TBI) and post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- ◆ Hired 100 new Outreach Coordinators to provide services to returning OIF/OEF veterans. The new coordinators are located in Vet Centers throughout the country especially near our military processing stations.

- ◆ Created a new Advisory Committee on OIF/OEF Veterans and their families to advise him on ways to improve programs serving OIF/OEF veterans.
- ◆ Directed the Veterans Benefits Administration to give priority to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF) veterans in its compensation and pension claim system.
- ◆ Launched a major information technology transformation in the VA with the way it uses and safeguards personal and health information of veterans.
- ◆ Created a new Office of Operations, Security, and Preparedness to deal with emergency planning and security. Initiated the overhaul of the VA's vast contracting and acquisitions systems.
- ◆ Created a blue ribbon Genomic Research Advisory Committee to use the VA's expansive medical data holdings to advance the science of predictive medicine.
- ◆ Commenced a major campaign to reduce the high rate of diabetes in veterans.
- ◆ Launched a national effort in the Veterans Health Administration to eradicate staph infections in VA hospitals.
- ◆ Approved 82 new Community-Based Outpatient Clinics (CBOC) to bring VA top notch care closer to the veterans who have earned it.
- ◆ Created a new multi-campus Nursing Academy through partnership with the nursing schools throughout the country to help address a shortage of nurses within the VA and nationwide.
- ◆ Directed the hiring of suicide prevention counselors at each of VA's 153 facilities to strengthen one of the nation's largest mental health programs. He also established a 24-hour national suicide prevention hotline that will be operational by the end of July 2007.
- ◆ Hired 100 new Patient Care Advocates to help severely injured veterans and their families manage VA's system for health care and financial benefits.
- ◆ Led the President's recent Task Force on Returning Global War on Terror Heroes to improve the delivery of federal services and benefits to Global War on Terror service members and veterans.

"This is a very big Government agency that, among many other things, sees over 1 million patients a week in its

*(Continued on page 7 - SEE: Resignation)*

## Legislation Allows Veterans to Salute the Flag

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>



WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) today praised the passage by unanimous consent of his bill (S.1877) clarifying U.S. law to allow veterans and servicemen not in uniform to salute the flag. Current law (US Code Title 4, Chapter 1) states that veterans and servicemen not in uniform should place their hand over their heart without clarifying whether they can or should salute the flag.

"The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service," Senator Inhofe said. "Veterans and service members continue representing the military services even when not in uniform.

"Unfortunately, current U.S. law leaves confusion as to whether veterans and service members out of uniform can or should salute the flag. My legislation

will clarify this regulation, allowing veterans and servicemen alike to salute the flag, whether they are in uniform or not.

"I look forward to seeing those who have served saluting proudly at baseball games, parades, and formal events. I believe this is an appropriate way to honor and recognize the 25 million veterans in the United States who have served in the military and remain as role models to other citizens. Those who are currently serving or have served in the military have earned this right, and their recognition will be an inspiration to others."

"If It Weren't For The United States Military"  
 "There Would Be NO United States of America"  
 "Home of The Free, Because of the Brave"

## VA Clarifies Policy on Flag-Folding Recitations "13-Fold" Ceremony

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>



WASHINGTON (October 30, 2007) -- To ensure burial services at the 125 national cemeteries operated by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) reflect the wishes of veterans and their families, VA officials have clarified the Department's policy about recitations made while the U.S. flag is folded at the gravesite of a veteran.

"Honoring the burial wishes of veterans is one of the highest commitments for the men and women of VA," said William F. Tuerk, VA's Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs. "A family may request the recitation of words to accompany the meaningful presentation of the American flag as we honor the dedication and sacrifice of their loved ones."

Traditional gravesite military funeral honors include the silent folding and presentation of an American flag, a 21-gun rifle salute, and the playing of "Taps."

The clarification includes the following:

- ◆ Volunteer honor guards are authorized to read the so-called "13-fold" flag recitation or any comparable script;
- ◆ Survivors of the deceased need to provide material and request it be read by the volunteer honor guards; and
- ◆ Volunteer honor guards will accept requests for recitations that reflect any or no religious traditions, on an equal basis.

Veterans with a discharge other than dishonorable, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in a national cemetery. Other burial benefits available for all eligible veterans, regardless of whether they are buried in a national cemetery or a private cemetery, include a burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a government headstone or marker.

*(Resignation—Continued from page 6)*

health care system, and is doing a world class job," Nicholson said. "The American people can feel proud about the way we are treating our veterans. The President and the Congress have been very supportive and for that I am grateful as well."

Nicholson thanked the President, "he has given me terrific opportunities to serve my country and under

his strong and supportive leadership, it has been a real privilege."

Nicholson left the private business world over 10 years, where he ran a successful residential development and construction company. He was elected Chairman of the Republican National Committee in January 1997. Immediately prior to becoming Secretary, he served as the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See.

## VA Honors Little Caesars Founder for Supporting Veterans in Business

The following information is from [va.media.relations@VA.GOV](mailto:va.media.relations@VA.GOV)



WASHINGTON (Sept. 17, 2007) - Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson today presented a Secretary's Award to Little Caesars founder Michael Ilitch in recognition of his advancement of veterans in business through pizza franchise discounts.

Ilitch's restaurant franchise has a program to aid any veteran interested in starting a Little Caesars restaurant and also offers special opportunities with additional deep discounts, credit, training, and marketing support for those veterans who are service-disabled.

"Michael Ilitch recognizes the value of veterans in business," said Nicholson. "VA's Center for Veterans Enterprise will assist veterans seeking to become Little Caesars franchise owners and looks forward to helping veterans translate the leadership skills they learned while in uniform to business ownership and expansion."

In conjunction with the award ceremony, Ilitch, who is a former Marine, served pizza to homeless veterans at the

VA headquarters in Washington from Little Caesars' "Love Kitchen," a pizza kitchen on wheels that travels across the U.S. and Canada to feed the homeless and disaster survivors.

To assist service-disabled veterans who want to open a Little Caesars restaurant, the program waives a \$20,000 franchise fee on the first store, provides \$10,000 credit on the initial equipment order, and provides a variety of marketing support and financing options and other benefits, which can total \$68,000. For other veterans, the fee is reduced by \$5,000 and the credit extended for equipment is \$5,000.

Veterans are offered business opportunities by a variety of franchisers through the International Franchise Association's VetFran program. More information about the companies' special benefits for veterans is available at [www.franchise.org](http://www.franchise.org) and the VA Center for Veterans Enterprise's resource site to assist veteran entrepreneurs at [www.vetbiz.gov](http://www.vetbiz.gov).

## Setting the Record Straight...

### VA Delivering for Our Homeless Veterans

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

#### Reducing Homelessness

VA is the largest federal provider of direct assistance to the homeless. Services provided include health care, outreach and case management, employment, rehabilitation, transitional residential care, therapeutic work and assistance with permanent housing.

There has been a 22 percent reduction in the number of homeless veterans in comparison to estimates as recent as five years ago. The estimated number of homeless veterans fell from 250,000 to today's 195,000 on any given night.

Only about 30 percent of homeless veterans are chronically homeless, which are the hardest

to reach among the homeless population. VA's programs are designed to directly serve this important group.

VA supports more than 15,000 beds in transitional housing facilities and VA residential treatment programs.

#### Providing Our Homeless Veterans with Health Care

100,000 veterans – more than half the number of homeless veterans - receive VA health care each year. VA expects to spend \$1.6 billion for medical treatment and \$287 million for homeless specific programs in FY 08.

346 program clinicians are working nationwide who contact homeless veterans as part of their

dedication to the homeless health care outreach effort.

#### Collaborating with Local Homeless Providers

More than \$300 million in grants have been provided to local partners for homeless programs.

VA also partners with hundreds of communities on Stand Downs across the nation. Stand Downs give homeless veterans a temporary refuge where they can obtain food, shelter, clothing and a range of community and VA assistance. Providers can contact VA's Homeless Veterans Programs Office at <http://www1.va.gov/homeless/>, (202) 273-5764, or e-mail VA at [homelessvets@mail.va.gov](mailto:homelessvets@mail.va.gov).

## One Exam Used for "Fitness for Duty" and Disability Pay

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>



WASHINGTON (November 7, 2007) - In a landmark agreement to simplify life for service members with medical problems as they leave the military and return to the civilian world, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD) signed a memorandum to pilot a single physical examination to be used by both Departments.

"This agreement commits VA and DoD to develop a single process to assess the medical conditions of wounded, injured or ill service members," said Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Gordon H. Mansfield. "We will make it easier for these heroes to go back to their homes, with the key questions about their eligibility for VA compensation already decided."

The agreement, signed Nov. 6 by Mansfield and Dr. David S.C. Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, calls for a pilot program to evaluate a single physical examination that would be used by DoD to determine the medical fitness of injured personnel to remain in uniform and by VA for awarding disability compensation.

Today's announcement continues progress on the recommendations of the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors, co-chaired by former Sen. Robert Dole and former Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala.

The pilot, which begins late this month, involves VA and DoD facilities in Washington, D.C.

Service members from the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, and the Air Force's Malcolm Grow Medical Center at Andrews Air Force Base will participate in the pilot.

Medical evaluations will be performed by VA, although the agreement notes the physicals could actually take place in VA medical centers, military installations, VA contracted examination centers or other facilities.

The memorandum says the process "lays the foundation for building a network of qualified providers and resources that will meet both DoD and VA requirements and ease the transition of members from military service to veteran status."

The evaluations will be based upon VA's system for disability examinations and include an examination of medical conditions identified by military physicians that call into question a service member's fitness for duty, as well as other applicable medical conditions identified by the service member together with VA.

## Transitioning War Zone Skills to Home: Further Understanding the Readjustment Process

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

**BEGINNING:** Thursday, February 7, 2008

(Every Thursday evening) through March 27, 2008.

**TIME:** 6:00 P.M. to 8:30 P.M.

**WHERE:** Milwaukee VA Medical Center

Matousek Auditorium  
5000 W. National Ave  
Milwaukee WI

**PRESENTERS:** Catherine Coppolillo, Ph. D.

Psychologist

Andrew Hendrickson, R.N.

Coordinator

An eight-session program for recent combat veterans offered by the Zablocki VA Medical Center (VAMC), Milwaukee, WI.

Milwaukee VAMC offers an educational program for

returning military service members and combat veterans, along with a guest.

As military service members return from deployment and eventually to civilian life, it is important to understand the opportunities and potential challenges that may lie ahead.

All service members who served during Operation Iraqi Freedom/Operation Enduring Freedom and the Global War on Terrorism are invited to participate.

The program will focus on service members returning to home life and understanding the changes that occurred while being deployed.

For more information or to register for the program, call Andrew Hendrickson, R.N. at 414-384-2000 ext 42442 or 414-750-1738.

**Pre-registration is strongly encouraged.**

## Millions Receive VA Cost-of-Living Increases

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (December 31, 2007) - Millions of veterans and eligible family members will see their disability compensation, pension, and survivors' benefits increased as the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides an annual cost-of-living increase for key benefits.

"This increase ensures that those veterans who have earned this benefit for incurring a disability in defense of our country receive payments that keep pace with today's cost of living," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "VA is committed to the needs of our veterans and their families. We owe America's defenders no less."

A recent law signed by President Bush provides a 2.3 percent increase in disability compensation and survivors' benefits. Eligible veterans and family members will see this increase starting in their January 2008 checks.

Under the veterans' disability compensation program, tax-free payments will generally range from \$117 to \$2,527 per month depending on the degree of disability. Special payments up to \$7,232 per month apply to the most severely injured veterans.

Pension disability benefits will also be increased by the same percentage and effective on the same date. The maximum annual rate for permanently and totally disabled veterans or veterans over age 65 can range from \$11,181 to \$18,654, based on household income and whether veterans are in need of help with activities for daily living.

This increase also applies to survivors of veterans who died in service or from a service-connected disability. Dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) survivors' benefit payments can range from \$1,091 to \$2,499 per month.

Survivors of wartime veterans receiving death pension are also entitled to an increase. The maximum annual payment rate for a surviving spouse can range from \$7,498 to \$11,985. Benefits under this program are intended to bring an eligible spouse's income to a level established by law.

Under each benefit program, additional allowances may be payable for helpless, minor or school age children.

For more information about VA benefits and services, go to VA's website at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or call 1-800-827-1000

## Pay in Vets' Work Program Ruled Tax-Free Ruling on Compensated Work Therapy Retroactive Three Years

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (January 7, 2008) -- Payments provided to veterans under two specific programs of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) -- the Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) and Incentive Therapy (IT) programs -- are no longer taxable, according to the Internal Revenue Service. Veterans who paid tax on these benefits in the past three years can claim refunds.

Recipients of CWT and IT payments no longer receive a Form 1099 (Miscellaneous Income) from VA. Veterans who paid tax on these benefits in tax years 2004, 2005 or 2006 can claim a refund by filing an amended tax return using IRS Form 1040X. Nearly 19,000 veterans received CWT benefits last year, while 8,500 received IT benefits.

The IRS agreed with a U.S. Tax Court decision

earlier in 2007 that CWT payments are tax-free veterans benefits. In so doing, the agency reversed a 1965 ruling that these payments were taxable and required VA to report payments as taxable income.

The CWT and IT programs provide assistance to veterans unable to work and support themselves. Under the CWT program, VA contracts with private industry and the public sector for work by veterans, who learn new job skills, strengthen successful work habits and regain a sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Veterans are compensated by VA for their work and, in turn, improve their economic and social well-being.

Under the IT program, seriously disabled veterans receive payments for providing services at about 70 VA medical centers.

## New VA Rules for Specially Adapted Housing Grants Programs Aids Most Seriously Injured



The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (January 4, 2008) - A change in the law that allows certain seriously injured veterans and servicemembers to receive multiple grants for constructing or modifying homes has resulted in many new grants, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today.

Before the change, eligible veterans and servicemembers could receive special adaptive housing grants of \$10,000 or \$50,000 from VA only once. Now they may use the benefit up to three times, so long as the total grants stay within specified limits outlined in the law.

"Veterans seriously disabled during their military service have earned this benefit," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "This change ensures that every eligible veteran and servicemember has the chance to use the maximum amount afforded to them by our grateful nation."

In order to ensure all previous recipients are aware of this opportunity, VA has mailed more than 16,000 letters to eligible veterans, reaching out to those who used only a portion of their grant or who decided not to use the grant even after initially qualifying.

The response over the past year has been dramatic, with more than 4,600 applications received thus far. Of these, approximately 3,900 veterans have been determined eligible under the new law, and more than 200 grants already awarded.

VA has averaged about 1,000 adaptive housing grant applications per year during the past 10 years. Since the program began in 1948, it has provided more than \$650 million in grants to about 34,000 seriously disabled veterans.

To ensure veterans' and servicemembers' needs are met and grant money is spent properly, VA works closely throughout the entire process with contractors and architects to design, construct and modify homes that meet the individuals' housing accessibility needs.

Eligible for the benefit are those with specific service-connected disabilities entitling them to VA compensation for a "permanent and total disability." They may receive a grant to construct an adapted home or to modify an existing one to meet their special needs.

VA has three types of adapted housing grants available. The Specially Adapted Housing grant

(SAH), currently limited to \$50,000, is generally used to create a wheelchair-accessible home for those who may require such assistance for activities of daily living. VA's Home Loan Guaranty program and the Native American Direct Loan program may also be used with the SAH benefit to purchase an adaptive home.

The Special Housing Adaptations (SHA) grant, currently limited to \$10,000, is generally used to assist veterans with mobility throughout their homes due to blindness in both eyes, or the anatomical loss or loss of use of both hands or extremities below the elbow.

A third type established by the new law, the Temporary Residence Adaptation (TRA) grant, is available to eligible veterans and seriously injured active duty servicemembers who are temporarily living or intend to temporarily live in a home owned by a family member.

While the SAH and SHA grants require ownership and title to a house, in creating TRA Congress recognized the need to allow veterans and active duty members who may not yet own homes to have access to the adaptive housing grant program.

Under TRA, veterans and servicemembers eligible under the SAH program would be permitted to use up to \$14,000, and those eligible under the SHA program would be allowed to use up to \$2,000 of the maximum grant amounts. Each grant would count as one of the three grants allowed under the new program.

"The goal of all three grant programs is to provide a barrier-free living environment that offers the country's most severely injured veterans or servicemembers a level of independent living," added Peake.

Other VA adaptive housing benefits are currently available through Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Service's "Independent Living" program, the Insurance Service's Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance program, and the Veterans Health Administration's Home Improvement and Structural Alterations grant.

For more information about grants and other adaptive housing programs, contact a local VA regional office at 1-800-827-1000 or local veteran service organization. Additional program information and grant applications (VAF-26-4555) can be found at <http://www.homeloans.va.gov/sah.htm>.

## VA Distributes 2008 Insurance Dividends

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/>

WASHINGTON (January 3, 2008) – More than a million veterans are in line to share \$349 million in annual insurance dividends during 2008, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

“These dividends are a commitment from a grateful nation to safeguard the interests of America’s veterans,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

VA operates one of the nation’s largest life insurance programs, providing more than \$1 trillion in coverage to 7.1 million service members, veterans, and family members.

The dividend payments will be sent to an estimated 1.1 million holders of VA insurance policies on the anniversary date of their policies. Sent automatically through different payment plans, the amounts will vary based on the age of the veteran, the type of insurance, and the length of time the policy has been in force.

The dividends come from the earnings of trust funds into which veterans have paid insurance premiums over the years, and are linked to returns on investments in U.S. government securities.

VA officials caution veterans about a long-running scam in which various groups charge fees to “locate” veterans who are eligible for the dividends. Veterans eligible for the

dividends have had VA life insurance policies in effect since they left the military and have received annual notifications from VA about the policies.

Dividends are paid each year to veterans holding certain government life insurance policies and who served between 1917 and 1956.

World War II veterans holding National Service Life Insurance ("V") policies comprise the largest group receiving 2008 insurance dividend payments. They are expected to receive total payments of \$269.6 million.

An additional group of World War II era veterans, those who have Veterans Reopened Insurance ("J," "JR" and "JS") policies, will in total receive dividends of \$9.2 million.

Korean War era veterans who have maintained Veterans Special Life Insurance ("RS" and "W") policies can expect to receive dividends totaling \$69.3 million.

Dividends totaling \$875,000 will be paid to veterans who served between World War I and 1940 and who hold U.S. Government Life Insurance ("K") policies.

Veterans who have questions about their policies may contact the VA insurance toll-free number at 1-800-669-8477 or send an email to [VAinsurance@va.gov](mailto:VAinsurance@va.gov). They may also visit VA on the Internet at [www.insurance.va.gov](http://www.insurance.va.gov).

### *(Wounded Warrior—Continued from page 1)*

One thing to watch is whether the Bush administration provides enough resources to make the policies work, especially for expanded services, Filner said.

While leaving some of the details to the Pentagon, the bill requires implementation by July 1 of a comprehensive policy for improved treatment of wounded combat veterans, including assignment of counselors and coordinators to help with medical and nonmedical issues. Once the policy is in place, Congress says it wants reports every three months on how the plan is working.

#### Disability ratings

Lawmakers still want the VA and Pentagon to use the same system to rate disabilities, but the bill recognizes that this is a complex task. First, it orders a defensewide policy to be set, so all of the services are using the same standards and processes for the medical and disability evaluations to determine whether a person can stay on active duty - and, if they cannot, to determine how they are compensated.

One veterans advocate, retired Army Col. Michael Parker, said some provisions of the bill may spark problems. One change is aimed at limiting instances when a service member's disability is judged by the military to be the result of a condition that existed before entering service.

Parker said this often happens to troops returning from Iraq

and Afghanistan, particularly those with mental health issues.

The bill attempts to limit such judgments by establishing the presumption that a person who has served six months or more on active duty did not enter the military with a disability unless there is compelling evidence to the contrary, such as a specific citation on an entrance exam.

But Parker said it appears the change was written so that it would not be binding; it mentions an obsolete law, and there is a risk that service members could end up worse off than before.

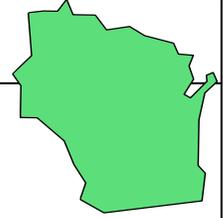
Congressional aides have heard Parker's argument but are not willing to admit a mistake; however, that possibility is one reason lawmakers left some of the more complex issues to be determined through policies prepared by Pentagon officials.

The final bill would order a report on personality-disorder discharges so lawmakers can see the number of cases in which mental problems are determined not to be the military's responsibility.

Lawmakers also seek other reports and studies that could lead to further changes. They want large studies of the physical and mental health of returning Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, including readjustment needs, that would help determine the size of future military and VA health care budgets.

They also want specific studies on special needs for women veterans, on support services for families and on brain injuries.

## NEWS UPDATE FOR STATE BENEFITS



### Former Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary, John R. Moses Dies at 88

The following information <http://dva.state.wi.us>

(MADISON) – John R. Moses, former Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, passed away on Saturday, December 8, 2007, at the age of 88.

"John Moses was a revered leader of the department for twenty years," said WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos. "His leadership was of great benefit to Wisconsin's veterans, and he will be greatly missed."

In 1961, John Moses was appointed Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and assumed the post in 1962. Among his many achievements during his tenure as Secretary, he led the revitalization of the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King and worked to improve the financial standing of the department, including the WDVA home loan program.

Exhibits at the G.A.R. Memorial Hall were significantly improved during the mid-1960s when Secretary Moses, a World War II tank commander, received legislative approval to upgrade the museum displays. Moses hired a professional curator and a staff assistant in 1970 as the exhibit function of the G.A.R. Hall became the main activity of the memorial. Historical artifacts were

systematically catalogued. The American Association of Museums accredited the G.A.R. Memorial Hall Museum. Attendance figures reflected the popularity of the museum as visitation averaged 80,000 per year for over a decade, the highest attendance of all Madison museums at the time, helping to set the stage for the later successful efforts in creating the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in its current location.

Secretary Moses retired from the department in 1982, continuing to live in Madison with his wife Mildred.

On June 16, 2006, following a meeting of the Board of Veterans Affairs, WDVA dedicated a key facility at the Wisconsin Veterans Home in King as the, "John Moses Central Services Building," in recognition of Secretary Moses' vision and achievements, including helping to fully establish the King Home as one of the largest state veterans homes in the nation.

Moses is survived by his wife of nearly 22 years, Mildred Jaynes-Moses--a former Director of Nursing at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King--and his six children, six step-children, and many grandchildren.



### In the Belly of the Dragon: Life and Death in I Corps Now through March 2008

The following information <http://dva.state.wi.us>

Half of all combat deaths in Vietnam occurred in I Corps, the five northern most provinces of South Vietnam. "In the Belly of the Dragon: Life and Death in I Corps" is the Wisconsin Veterans Museum's latest exhibit, featuring this significant part of the Vietnam War. The exhibit features rare photos, letters, and diaries, along with significant equipment and collections. Each part of the exhibit emphasizes the personal stories of Wisconsin veterans who served in I-Corps.

Marine SGT Jerry Paul's letters to his family and girlfriend are re-printed and displayed in the exhibit. A crew chief on a CH-34 helicopter, Paul described, in detail, the intensity of combat and his views on relationships with the Vietnamese people. Paul was also a bit of an amateur artist and included many pencil drawings in his letters, as

well as photos of Vietnamese farmers tending to their rice paddies. A firebase bunker is also displayed, based on the collections of Milwaukee native and American veteran, Edward Beauchamp. Constructed out of spent 105mm ammunition boxes, the bunker is a repository not only for items and ephemera used by soldiers during the war, but also American culture during the Vietnam era. Articles such as tin Ritz and Premium saltine cans, pin-up girls, flat-top beer cans, and posters line the walls and shelves. The ongoing sounds of an actual NVA mortar attack add a sense of reality to the display.

"In the Belly of the Dragon: Life and Death in I Corps" will remain open until early 2008. In mid-2007, we hope to add new artifacts, photographs, and more stories of Wisconsin veterans to the exhibit. Since the exhibit opened, the Museum has received several new archival donations, some of which may be included in these change outs.

## NEWS UPDATE FOR MILITARY RETIRED PROGRAMS



### Some Retirees Will No Longer Pay SBP Premiums in 2008

The following information was found on the internet <http://www.dfas.mil/retiredpay.html>

ARLINGTON, Va. (AFRNS) Participants in the Uniformed Services Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) for retired military members now have a new milestone to mark on their calendars.

Effective October 1, 2008, SBP participants who reach 70 years of age and have made 360 payments (30 years), will no longer have to pay premiums for continued SBP coverage and will be placed in Paid-up SBP status.

Paid-up SBP provisions were mandated by the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal 1999. The law also established a paid-up status, also beginning on October 1, 2008, for participants in the Retired Servicemans Family Protection Plan once they each 70 years of age.

No action is required of SBP participants to be placed in Paid-up SBP status. Once the eligibility criteria has been met, the Defense Finance and Accounting Service will automatically stop deducting premiums from qualifying military retired pay accounts.

The law establishing Paid-up SBP does not allow for refunds of premiums paid before October 1, 2008, even though a retiree may have reached age 70 and made 360 or more premium payments.

DFAS is currently developing changes to the military retiree pay systems that will monitor the number of SBP premiums paid and the age of the participant. The system updates are targeted for a May 2008 completion date. At that time, SBP participants who will be eligible for Paid-up SBP status on October 1, 2008, or will meet eligibility within a short time of the implementation date, will be notified by mail of their impending paid-up status.

Those military retirees who become eligible for Paid-up SBP status after the initial group will be notified of their SBP status on their December 2008 annual Retiree Account Statements that will note the number of premiums paid to date. Each RAS issued after December 2008, whether annually or as a result of a pay change, will include the Paid-up SBP premium counter, based on DFAS records, to help retirees monitor their eligibility status.

More information on Paid-up SBP, including frequently asked questions and news updates, should be available at the DFAS Web site at <http://www.dfas.mil/retiredpay.html> within the next several months. (Courtesy of the Defense Finance and Accounting Service)

**America is #1  
Thanks to  
Our Veterans**



## NEWS UPDATE FOR THE LOCAL AREA



### 2nd Annual Recognizing Outstanding Kids Art Show

The following information was received from Waukesha County Dept of Health & Human Services



people created that tells the story of individual military veterans and their contributions to all of us. The title of this part of the show was *"The Stories of Freedom"*. The public was invited to attend and to see the many items these talented individuals made.

Included in the display was a mural in recognition of the contributions our veterans have made to our community. The mural is a large painting of an American flag, and it now hangs on one of the interior walls outside the Veterans Service Office in the Waukesha County Human Services Building.

On Nov 8, 2007, The Waukesha County Dept. of Health & Human Services hosted the "2nd Annual Recognizing Outstanding Kids Art Show" to acknowledge and display the creative efforts and artistic talents of young people who are served by the Department.

As part of this year's show, through a joint effort with the Waukesha County Dept. of Veterans Services, also on display was art that young

The creation of the mural involved a group of young people working together with local military veterans.



### Supermarket of Veterans Benefits

The following information was found on the internet <http://dva.state.wi.us/>

Waukesha County hosted a Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Supermarket of Veterans Benefits on November 6 and 7<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The event was an outstanding success. Over 800 veterans, their dependents and survivors attended. There was a wide array of resources available to the attendees.

Some of the State agencies represented were the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Claims Office staff, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Cemeteries, the Workforce Development Center staff. A variety of employers were on hand and several Waukesha County Departments were there.

There were several Federal agencies represented, including Social Security, the Veterans Administration Hospital, the Veterans Administration Regional Office, and the Vets Center.

I hope that we will again sponsor this great event. If you did not make the event, but have questions about various benefits/entitlements both veteran and non-veteran, call our office at 262-548-7732 and we will help you.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR !!**  
*May you all have a Happy, Healthy and Prosperous Year !*



## Local Cemetery Now Enabling Genealogy Searches Online

The following information was received from Prairie Home Cemetery

Waukesha, WI, January 8, 2008 – Prairie Home Cemetery in Waukesha, WI, is now allowing access to its extensive database of maps and interments to the public via the internet. The cemetery, municipally owned by the city of Waukesha, partnered with Ramaker Associates, Inc., of Sauk City, Wisconsin, who designed the system known as eCIMS (electronic cemetery management system), and Incite Strategic, LLC, of Mequon, Wisconsin, who designed the website. Genealogists and any interested parties are encouraged to visit the website, [www.prairiehomecemetery.com](http://www.prairiehomecemetery.com), to easily log into the database to search for friends or relatives interred as early as 1835. Given the increased interest in genealogy, people have regularly contacted the cemetery office asking questions or seeking information on people interred. “While we welcome the direct inquiries, we know that people like to search from the convenience of their own computers anytime during the day or night,” comments David Brenner, Cemetery Manager.

Individuals can now search for interments, print maps, even see if property may be available before verifying at the cemetery office. The service went active last week, and has already had activity.

Additionally, the site also provides Prairie Home Cemetery with a unique sales tool. “Families have long recognized the importance in pre-planning interment arrangements, explains Brenner. “That trend is increasing. And this service enables those interested to see if spaces are still available next to loved ones, or to quietly search for attractive locations prior to calling us.”

### About Prairie Home Cemetery

Prairie Home is a sixty-nine acre historical cemetery that became Waukesha’s municipal cemetery in 1849. While providing traditional burial, Prairie Home offers a wide array of options to the public including traditional burial as well as mausoleum (above-ground) crypts and cremation niches, a perennial planted cremation garden providing a budget conscious alternative, and various memorial benches, cremation rocks, and lawn niches.



### For More Information Contact:

David Brenner  
 Prairie Home Cemetery  
 605 S Prairie Ave  
 Waukesha WI 53186  
 262-650-2575

## IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

JAN 21ST Martin Luther King Jr., Day

FEB 12TH Lincoln’s Birthday



FEB 14TH **Valentine’s Day**



FEB 18TH President’s Day

FEB 22ND Washington’s Birthday



MAR 17TH **St. Patrick’s Day**



MAR 20TH Spring Begins

APR 1ST **April Fool’s Day**

