

The Navigator

Waukesha County Veterans' Services

FEDERAL, STATE & LOCAL BENEFITS UPDATE

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NEWS UPDATE FOR FEDERAL BENEFITS



VA-DoD Program Serves Severely Disabled Combat Veterans

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

WASHINGTON (May 7, 2008) - Bolstering its commitment to improve services to those seriously injured in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and its federal partners have marked a milestone with establishment of a promised new office and deployment of workers to key military treatment facilities.

"The President vowed action on this key recommendation from his advisory commission on war veterans' needs, and today our new Federal Recovery Coordinator Program office is actively at work with dozens of severely injured patients around the country," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

In coordination with the Department of Defense and the Department of Health and Human Services, the joint Federal Recovery Coordinator Program is designed to cut across bureaucratic lines and reach into the private sector as necessary to identify services needed for seriously wounded and ill service members, veterans and their families.

A key recommendation of a presidential commission chaired by former Sen. Bob Dole and former Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, the recovery coordinators do not directly provide care, but coordinates federal health care teams and private community resources to achieve the personal and professional goals of an individual-

ized "life map" or recovery plan developed with the service members or veterans who qualify for the federal recovery coordinator program.

At VA, which is coordinating the recovery coordinators' office, a director has been appointed, Ginnean Quisenberry, and six field staff members are actively working with 85 patients at three major military treatment facilities, with four additional coordinators expected to be appointed soon.

Currently the federal recovery coordinators are based at three military hospitals most likely to receive severely wounded service members evacuated from the combat theater: Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., and Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio.

A fourth site, Naval Medical Center San Diego, will receive two of the additional four field staff expected to be appointed soon.

Though initially based in military facilities, their work seamlessly extends into the patient's civilian life after discharge. Heeding President Bush's charge to ensure these severely injured persons do not get lost in the system, the coordinators actively link the veteran with public and private resources that will meet their rehabilitation needs.

(Continued on page 4 - VA—DOD PROGRAM)

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

Congress has moved quickly in several areas to improve veterans' benefits and entitlements. They have provided millions of additional dollars to help the Veterans Administration (VA) medical system care for America's veterans. Another example is the swift passage of the Post 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2008, recently signed by the President into law. It was amazing to see both parties in the federal legislature hammer out their differences and pass this legislation.

This new (GI Bill), Post 9/11 Veterans Education Assistance Act of 2008 is a new benefit that will provide educational assistance to individuals who have served on active duty on or after September 11, 2001. The Post 9/11 GI Bill benefits are payable on August 1, 2009, towards training completed after 7/31/2008. Veterans should contact their County Veterans Service Office for more details, which are still emerging since the legislation was just enacted.

The VA has also moved fairly fast to set-up different Advisory Boards and panels such as the VA Gulf War Committee, which was formed to advise the Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs on the full range of health care and benefits

needs of those who served in that conflict. The first meetings were held June 16-19, 2008. They are also calling ill or injured veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OEF-OIF) and are also targeting over 500,000 OEF-OIF veterans who have been discharged from active duty but have not contacted the VA for health care. These individuals will be called and informed of the benefits and services available to them. Additionally, military personnel received information about VA benefits when they left active duty, and the VA has sent every veteran a letter with this information after their discharge. For five years after their discharge from the military, these combat veterans have special access to the VA health care.

The care of seriously injured soldiers making the medical transition from the Department of Defense Medical facilities to the Veterans Administration Hospitals is being streamlined. Part of that transition also includes filing an initial disability claim on the soldiers/veterans behalf with the VA Regional Office. From some of the cases I have seen, these individuals need to work closely with a Service Representative from a veteran's organization or a County Veteran's Service Office to ensure that all disabilities incurred due to their military service are listed on the claim and to ensure that the claim also includes any disabilities that are secondary to the service connected disabilities. Overall, I believe the effort by all to help these individuals is very good.

I recently read the July/August 2008 AARP Magazine, and yes I am old enough and a member. In

the magazine, on page 60, is an article titled "When Wounded Warriors Come Home." It is a very moving article about how parents, in many cases, are becoming the long term caregivers of their children/soldiers.



After reading the article I feel that the ball has definitely been dropped with regard to the care for these individuals as to who should be providing that needed care and who should be paying for that care. These individuals are service connected disabled, and from the descriptions given in the article, they are probably 100% service-connected. There should be no questions about who pays for their care. It should be the United States Government/Veterans Administration. Our government sent these individuals off to war and the government should be responsible for caring for them, regardless of the cost. Further, there should be no limit on the time over which needed care is provided and paid for. If 24 hours a day is needed so be it. It should be a done deal.

I find it deplorable that any agency of the United States Government would attempt to limit the time and costs in providing care for those who proudly served this country.

Maybe the article is a bit one sided, I don't know, but all I got out of it was our veterans needing care and that the necessary care was not being provided or paid for. If that is a fact, in my opinion, it is an injustice that needs be corrected. I am not aware of any such cases in Waukesha County. If you are aware of any, have the veteran or their family contact their County Veteran Service Office.

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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.



More Education Benefits Coming to Reservists, Guardsmen Changes Affect Those with Multiple Tours

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

WASHINGTON (March 3, 2008) - Some members of the National Guard and the Reserves who serve on active duty will see a significant increase in their educational benefits, thanks to improvements announced today by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

"Reservists and National Guardsmen who serve multiple tours on active duty may get an increase in their educational benefits, in keeping with the value of their service to our nation," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake.

Under new provisions, members who accumulate three years on active duty, regardless of breaks in service, may be eligible for the maximum payment under the Reserve Education Assistance Program (REAP). Previously, reservists and guardsmen had to serve two continuous years on active duty to receive the highest payment.

The new eligibility rules are retroactive to October 1, 2007. The top payment under REAP is currently \$880.80 per month.

The new law, part of the National Defense Authorization Act, also expands the period of eligibility for certain Guard and Reserve members who complete their service obligation before separation from the selected reserve.

Members meeting these criteria may be eligible to use REAP

benefits for a period of ten years following discharge. Benefits typically end upon separation for members who do not complete their full, obligated service.

Additionally, some REAP-eligible National Guard and Reserve members may now make an extra contribution to the Department of Defense to increase their monthly benefit rates.

Service members receive an additional \$5 per month for each \$20 contributed. With the maximum \$600 contribution, this option can add up to \$5,400 to a member's total 36-month education benefit package.

Beginning on October 1, 2008, participants in REAP and the Montgomery GI Bill program for the Selected Reserve who pursue non-degree programs lasting less than two years may also be eligible to receive accelerated payments.

During FY 2007, more than 60,000 National Guardsmen and reservists were paid under REAP, more than 41,000 were paid under the Montgomery GI Bill program for the Selected Reserves, and approximately 344,000 participants were paid under the Montgomery GI Bill for active-duty members.

For more information on changes to VA's GI Bill benefits, go to www.GIBILL.va.gov or contact VA directly at 1-888-GIBILL1 (or 1-888-442-4551).

VA Reaching Out to Vets with Mortgage Problems Peake: VA Has a "Solid Record of Success" in Helping

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



WASHINGTON (June 12, 2008) - Many home owners have found it difficult recently to pay their mortgages, but quick intervention by loan counselors at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has actually reduced the number of veterans defaulting on their home loans.

"VA is reaching out to veterans -- both those who use our home-loan guaranty program and those who don't take advantage of our guaranties -- to keep people in their homes," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "I'm proud of our solid record of success in helping veterans and active-duty personnel deal with financial crises."

Accounting for much of this success are VA counselors at nine regional loan centers who assist people with VA-guarantied loans avoid foreclosure through counseling and special financing arrangements. The counselors also can assist other veterans with financial problems. VA counselors have helped about 74,000 veterans, active-duty members and survivors keep their homes since 2000, a savings to the government of nearly \$1.5 billion.

Depending on a veteran's circumstances, VA can intercede with the borrower on the veteran's behalf to pursue options -- such as repayment plans, forbearance, and loan modifica-

tions -- that would allow a veteran to keep a home.

To obtain help from a VA financial counselor, veterans can call VA toll-free at 1-877-827-3702. Information about VA's home loan guaranty program can be obtained at www.homeloans.va.gov.

Since 1944, when home-loan guaranties were offered with the original GI Bill, VA has guarantied more than 18 million home loans worth \$911 billion. Last year, about 135,000 veterans, active-duty service members and survivors received loans valued at nearly \$24 billion.

About 2.3 million home loans still in effect were purchased through VA's home-loan guaranty program, which makes home loans more affordable for veterans, active-duty members and some surviving spouses by protecting lenders from loss if the borrower fails to repay the loan. More than 90 percent of VA-backed home loans were given without a downpayment.

April data shows that foreclosures are down more than 50 percent from the same months in 2003. VA attributes this to prudent credit underwriting standards, its robust supplemental loan servicing program and VA financial loan counselors.

VA Announces SGLI and VGLI Premium Reductions Peake: Change Makes Programs More Affordable

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

WASHINGTON (April 7, 2008) - Veterans and military personnel with life insurance policies managed by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) will see a reduction in their premiums, thanks to improved investment earnings and a reduction in non-combat claims.

The premium cuts affect military personnel covered by Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) and veterans covered by the Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI).

"The reduction in SGLI premiums makes life insurance even more affordable for today's men and women in uniform," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. "Lower VGLI premiums will allow more veterans to provide this low-cost financial security to their families."

On July 1, 2008, the premiums for basic SGLI will be 6.5 cents per month for \$1,000 of coverage, down from 7 cents per month for \$1,000. This translates into a 7 percent savings.

Servicemembers with the maximum \$400,000 of coverage will see their monthly premium reduced from \$28 to \$26. Servicemembers are also covered against severe traumatic injury for an additional dollar each month.

The reduction in SGLI premiums is made possible by lower, non-combat-related claims and increases in investment earnings. VA officials believe this premium reduction will help maintain the nearly universal participation in the program.

VGLI provides renewable term policies for people after their discharges from the military. Veterans pay premiums according to their age for this coverage.

On July 1, 2008, VGLI premium rates will be reduced for veterans aged 30 to 64, who make up 85 percent of those insured under the program. Premium rates for those under age 30 are already competitive.

Premium reductions, ranging from 4 percent to 12 percent, are a result of fewer claims being received. The reductions will ensure that VGLI remains highly competitive with similar insurance offered by commercial insurers.

"With servicemembers putting their lives at risk against terrorism, life insurance coverage is more important than ever," added Peake.

Peake said the premium reductions should result in increased program participation and retention. With increased enrollment, the department may be able to reduce rates in the future.

More than 2.4 million people currently participate in the VA-managed SGLI program, with another 433,000 in VGLI.

To obtain more information about the SGLI and VGLI premium reductions or to view a table with the new VGLI rates, visit the VA insurance Web site at www.insurance.va.gov, or call the Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance at 1-800-419-1473.

(VA—DOD PROGRAM—Continued from page 1)

Participating patients will include those with seriously debilitating burns, spinal cord injuries, amputations, visual impairments, traumatic brain injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder.

While initially focused in early stages for current military hospital inpatients, the FRCP involvement is expected to be a lifetime commitment to veterans and their families. The coordinators will maintain contacts by phone, visits and e-mail.

When a veteran settles in a remote area, VA will be able to use multimedia systems that integrate video

and audio teleconferencing so that veterans may visit a federal clinic or private center near their homes to link up with their case coordinator for a meeting.

The federal agencies are actively discussing ideas for ongoing improvements to the process, including monitoring demand patterns for possible adjustments to staffing as well as improved Web-based information for the service member adjusting to civilian life, such as links to a comprehensive guide to governmental and private-sector services integrated with their individual recovery plan and their own health records.

VA Secretary Appoints Panel of National Suicide Experts Goal is Reducing Veterans' Suicides

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

WASHINGTON (May 21, 2008) -Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake today announced the names of members appointed to two special panels that will make recommendations on ways the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) can improve its programs in suicide prevention, suicide research and suicide education.

"There is nothing more tragic than the death by suicide of even one of the great men or women who have served this nation," Peake said. "VA is committed to doing all we can to improve our understanding of a complicated issue that is also a national concern."

Membership in the first group, the "Blue Ribbon Work Group on Suicide Prevention in the Veterans Population," will be comprised of government experts in various suicide prevention and education programs. Those experts will come from agencies including the Department of Defense, the Centers for Disease Control, the National Institute of Health, and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The five-member work group is expected to meet from June 11-13, and will develop a report with recommendations for the Secretary within 15 days of meeting.

The second group is a nine-member expert panel, made up of nationally renowned experts in public health suicide programs, suicide research and clinical treatment programs, that will provide professional opinion, interpretation, and conclusions on information and data to the work group. It will also make recommendations to the work group on opportunities for improvement in VA's programs.

Secretary Peake initially announced the formation of the work group during testimony to the House Veterans Affairs Committee on May 6.

Members of the "Blue Ribbon Work Group on Suicide Prevention in the Veterans Population" include:

- ◆ Cmdr. Alex E. Crosby, M.D., medical epidemiologist with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

- ◆ Colonel Charles W. Hoge, M.D., director of the division of psychiatry and behavior services at Walter Reed Army Institute of Research;
- ◆ Colonel Robert Roy Ireland, M.D., program director for mental health policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Health Affairs;
- ◆ Richard McKeon, Ph.D., special advisor for suicide prevention with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration; and
- ◆ Jane Pearson, Ph.D., associate director for preventive interventions, National Institute of Mental Health.

Appointees to the expert panel include:

- ◆ Dr. Dan Blazer II, professor of psychology at Catholic University of America;
- ◆ Greg Brown, Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania;
- ◆ Martha Livingston Bruce, Ph.D., professor in clinical epidemiology and health services research at Weill Medical College of Cornell University;
- ◆ Dr. Eric D. Caine, chair of the department of psychiatry at the University of Rochester;
- ◆ Dr. Jan Fawcett, professor of psychiatry at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine;
- ◆ Robert D. Gibbons, director of the Center for Health Statistics, University of Illinois at Chicago;
- ◆ David Alan Jobes, Ph.D., professor of psychology at Catholic University of America;
- ◆ Mark S. Kaplan, Ph.D., from Portland State University. Member of the Suicide Prevention Action Network-USA National Scientific Advisory Council; and
- ◆ Thomas R. Ten Have, director of the Biostatistics Analysis Center at the University of Pennsylvania School of Medicine.

VA Names Members of Gulf War Veterans Advisory Committee Secretary Peake to Hear Their Concerns, Issues

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

WASHINGTON (May 13, 2008) -- Veterans who served in the Southwest Asia theater of operations during 1990-1991 will have their own special advocates before Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake, thanks to a new advisory committee Peake established to respond to issues unique to them.

The 14-member, independent panel will advise the Secretary and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) on the full range of health care and benefits needs of those who served in the conflict.

"Gulf War veterans made an invaluable contribution to national security and peace in a volatile region," Peake said. "This new panel will ensure that VA benefits and programs adapt to the needs of these veterans, just as our services have adapted for veterans of other conflicts."

Serving on the committee are Gulf War and other veterans, veterans service organizations' representatives, medical experts, and the survivors of Gulf War veterans. Members were selected to provide a variety of perspectives, experiences and expertise.

The committee will be chaired by Charles Cragin, a retired Navy captain, who has had several senior level positions within the federal government, including Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness and Chairman of VA's Board of Veterans Appeals.

In January 2002, the Department created an advisory committee to assist VA's secretary on research into the medical problems of Gulf War veterans. That older committee will retain responsibility for research involving veterans of the 1990-1991 conflict in the Middle East.

This committee's first meeting will be held in mid-June in Washington, D.C. It is expected to complete its work within 18 months. Committee meetings will be open to the public.

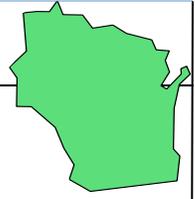
A list of the members of VA's Gulf War Advisory Committee is attached.

Membership

VA Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans

- ◆ Charles Cragin, (Chair) of Raymond, Maine. Currently serves as senior counselor for Maine Street Solutions, LLC.
- ◆ Martha Douthit of Ashburn, Va. Surviving spouse of Gulf War Army veteran, member of the Gold Star Wives of America, currently an international trade analyst with the U.S. Department of Commerce.
- ◆ Dr. Henry Falk of Atlanta. Retired rear admiral and former Assistant U.S. Surgeon General. Currently director for the Coordinating Center for Environmental Health and Injury Prevention with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- ◆ Mark Garner of Lorton, Va. A retired Marine Corps chief warrant officer-three and Gulf War veteran who served as a Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Defense Officer.
- ◆ Dr. Lynn Goldman of Chevy Chase, Md. Vice chair of the Institute of Medicine Gulf War and Health Study; currently professor of environmental health sciences at Johns Hopkins University.
- ◆ Dr. John Hart of Plano, Texas. Past president of the Society for Behavioral and Cognitive Neurology, currently professor of neurology and psychiatry at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.
- ◆ William (Rusty) Jones of South Riding, Va. Retired Marine Corps colonel, and veteran of Gulf War and Vietnam War.
- ◆ Kirt Love of Crawford, Texas. An Army veteran of the Gulf War, currently serving as director of the Desert Storm Battle Registry.
- ◆ Daniel Ortiz of Whittier, Calif. An Army veteran of the Gulf War, currently serving as department service director with the Veterans of Foreign Wars.
- ◆ Daniel Pinedo of Oceanside, Calif. Marine Corps colonel currently serving as the comptroller for First Marine Expeditionary Force at Camp Pendleton, Calif.
- ◆ Thomas Plewes of Annandale, Va. A retired Army lieutenant general and former chief of the Army Reserve. Currently a senior program officer with National Academy of Sciences.
- ◆ Valerie Randall of Savage, Md. A retired Army sergeant first class; currently with the Department of Homeland Security.
- ◆ Edward (Randy) Reese of Washington, D.C. An Army veteran of the Gulf War; currently national service director for the Disabled American Veterans.
- ◆ Steve Robertson of Fredericksburg, Va. A Gulf War veteran who served both in the Air Force and Army National Guard. Currently director of the national legislative commission for The American Legion.

NEWS UPDATE FOR STATE BENEFITS



Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery Expansion—Phase 2

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



The Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (NWVMC) located near Spooner has recently completed the Cemetery Expansion – Phase 2.

WDVA received a grant from the USDVA State Cemetery Grants Program in the amount of \$622,580. Phase 2 expansion now offers the following additional interment options for burial at the cemetery:

- ◆ 704 columbarium niches for cremation (above ground)
- ◆ 450 in-ground burial spaces for cremation

- ◆ 460 casket burial spaces (for outside dealer vaults)
- ◆ Scattering area for cremation

Included in the expansion was a second building at the maintenance facility for additional storage of equipment.

The Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery conducted the first burial at the facility on November 10, 2000. With the new expansion, eligible veterans burial needs will be met for the next 8 – 10 years. Additional phases of construction of the cemetery will continue as need arises.

For more information about the state veterans cemeteries go to www.dva.state.wi.us.

Mortgage Loan Rates Reduced for WI Veterans *Low Fixed Rates, Flexible Terms*

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



(MADISON) – The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) recently announced interest rate reductions on some of its popular loan programs for Wisconsin veterans. WDVA’s loan programs offer below market interest rates combined with flexible terms to meet the various borrowing needs of Wisconsin’s veterans.

“Today’s real estate market offers an excellent opportunity for first time home buyers in particular to take advantage of a buyer’s market that combines a huge housing inventory with very competitive prices and low mortgage rates,” said WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos.

Qualifying Wisconsin veterans who are looking to purchase a home can obtain a 30 year, fixed rate mortgage loan at 5.75% with only 5% down and no private mortgage insurance (PMI) required. There are no funding fees or points associated with these mortgage loans and no pre-payment penalties.

Additionally, all qualified veterans receive the same low, fixed rate.

Scocos added, “WDVA also offers other loan products that will appeal to veterans who opt to stay in their current homes for now but might like to make improvements or borrow for other purposes. WDVA offers Home Improvement Loans and Personal loans, both of which were recently reduced, with fixed rates as low as 5.85%. Home Improvement Loans can be used to improve a veteran’s primary residence and Personal Loans can be used for any purpose including debt consolidation, education, and purchasing a vehicle.”

For more information about WDVA veterans loan programs veterans should contact a local County Veterans Service Officer or visit WDVA at wisvetloans.com. Specific loan related questions can be directed toll-free to WDVA at 1-800-WIS-VETS (1-800-947-8387).

Wisconsin Airborne Museum Display Project

The following information was received from Badger Chapter 82nd Airborne Division Assoc.

The Badger State Chapter of the 82nd Airborne Division Association, Inc. is attempting to gather authentic Airborne memorabilia to be used in display cases to be placed in Veterans’ facilities and local museums throughout the State of Wisconsin. If you have any authentic Airborne memorabilia that you would be willing to share for our displays, we would greatly appreciate it. Your name will be placed with any donation on display and any memorabilia you donate will be returned to you at your request. Donations could include: patches, uniforms, pictures, medals, materials, equipment, etc.

The Badger State Chapter is a fraternal, social organization of Airborne Veterans that covers the entire State of Wisconsin.

Any Veteran who was Airborne qualified (Paratrooper or Gliderman) is eligible to join regardless of your unit. The 82nd Airborne Association welcomes Paratroopers and Glider Riders who served in the Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard. (Sorry, no Air Assault.)

If you would like more information on our Museum project to promote the Wisconsin Airborne Legacy or to find out about membership in our Badger State Chapter, please contact Tom Gaukel, 1721 Manassas Dr., Baraboo, WI 53913. Call: 608-355-2382.





State Edges Closer to “Right-Sizing” Plan for State Veterans Homes

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



(MADISON) – The state, as represented by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs, is nearing completion of another stage of a multi-year project aimed at “right-sizing” the state’s veterans homes and ensuring their quality long-term care.

The overall project, initiated in 2006 as a multi-pronged review and planning operation for the state’s system of long-term care for veterans, is aimed at incorporating current best practices into the state’s veterans homes, identifying opportunities for increased effectiveness and efficiency, modernizing the aging King Home, and ultimately “right-sizing” the continuum of long-term care for state veterans.

The operational assessment expected this summer will evaluate and make recommendations for both the King Home and the newer Union Grove Home to increase effectiveness and efficiency based on the long-term care industry’s best practices and benchmarks. Among the areas being reviewed are organizational structures, position responsibilities, staff utilization, direct care and support services.

“The King Home is an old institution, dating back more than 120 years. We know that there will need to be changes, some major,” said WDVA Secretary John A. Scocos.

“In recent years, we have made great strides forward, including a striking reduction in mandatory nursing staff overtime, dramatically improved labor relations, institution of in-house nurse training programs, and other major performance changes,” said Scocos. “I am confident we will continue to provide quality healthcare for our veterans now and in the future.”

The project’s ongoing, long-range demographics and demand study will help decision makers ensure continued quality long-term care for veterans by analyzing factors related to demand for long-term care and highlighting the changing face of the state’s veterans population. The number of veterans in Wisconsin is projected to decline from 446,415 in 2008 to about 258,000 veterans in 2030.

A 20-Year Capital Projects Master Plan will establish a baseline master plan for existing infrastructure of the Wisconsin Veterans Homes assuming no changes from current services and bed levels. A request for funding of the master plan is expected to be included in the department’s next budget request.

The final component of the project will be a financial assessment, which will provide cost models needed to make determinations regarding “right-sizing” of long-term care for veterans in Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Veterans Home at King, founded in 1887 to care for Civil War veterans, is a self-contained community of nearly 750 members, a staff of over 900, and a physical plant of 70 buildings located on a 320-acre campus in Waupaca County, Wisconsin. The King Home includes four separately licensed nursing facilities built between 1966 and 1993, a central services building, and an activity center connected by an underground tunnel system.

The Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove in Racine County includes assisted living and a memory care unit for up to 40 residents, which were converted from buildings no longer needed by the Southern Wisconsin Center for the Developmentally Disabled when the Home first opened in 2001. The Home’s 42-unit residential care apartment complex opened three years later, in 2004, while its 120-bed skilled nursing facility and activity and administration center opened in 2006.

Authorization for a third veterans home at Chippewa Falls Home was enacted in 2003. This third Home has been approved for 65 percent federal and 35 percent matching state funding, and is now on the federal approved projects list pending appropriations. In 2007, funding was appropriated for a study that is currently in process to review veterans’ long-term care needs in the Superior area.

The State Veterans Homes project is part of a broader effort begun by the department in late 2003 to ensure appropriate services and funding for state-level veterans’ programs – touted as among the most comprehensive in the nation – and which supplement and complement federal veterans’ benefits.

Most of the department’s 10-Year Solvency Plan for the Veterans Trust Fund was incorporated into the state’s 2005-07 biennial budget. The 2007-09 biennial budget enacted last Fall incorporated the department’s requested reallocation of costs across its three major funds to better reflect actual program expenditures, though a complementing request for general purpose revenue was not included.

For more information on the Wisconsin Veterans Homes visit www.WisVets.com/Homes or call 1-800-WIS-VETS (1-800-947-8387).

State Veterans Home Loan Programs Gets Long-Sought Boost Congressional Passage of Heroes Act Includes \$100 Million for Wisconsin

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

(MADISON) – A bill passed unanimously by Congress this week to assist military service members, veterans, and surviving family members includes a provision that will provide a much needed boost to the state's veterans home loan program.

“Our gratitude can never match how indebted we are to our men and women of the military, and for their sacrifices we must be committed to honoring and supporting their service,” said Governor Jim Doyle. “This historic expansion of Wisconsin's state veterans home loan program will help provide the opportunity for countless thousands of current and future veterans to own their own home.”

Among its many provisions, the Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax (HEART) Act will provide tax relief to current and former military service members, including a critical law change to ensure thousands of active duty military families qualify for economic stimulus payments, allowing troops' combat pay to count towards qualifying for the Earned Income Tax Credit, and making permanent the ability of active duty reservists to make penalty-free withdrawals from their retirement plans.

Key to Wisconsin, the bill also includes a provision that will allow for the state to issue up to \$100 million each year in federally tax-exempt Qualified Veterans Mortgage Bonds (QVMBs) – enough funding to aid about 600 state veterans annually in obtaining low-interest rate home loans.

“After years of effort and many smaller steps along the way, Congress has come together in a truly bipartisan fashion just before Memorial Day to pass critically important legislation that will honor and assist the men and women who serve our great nation,” said Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs Secretary John A. Scocos.

Five states – Alaska, California, Oregon, Texas, and Wisconsin, which together represent roughly twenty percent of the nation's veterans – are authorized to participate in the QVMB program.

Due to the program's restrictions, including that a qualified veteran must have entered service prior to 1977 in order to be eligible for a QVMB-funded loan, federal legislation was first introduced in early 1991 to ensure that new Gulf War veterans would be eligible to take advantage of the program. While changes were successfully made in the last Congress to expand eligibility to these veterans, continued low bonding levels threatened the continued existence of the state

veterans home loan programs for the affected states.

In May 2006, all available funds for Wisconsin's state veterans home loan program were exhausted, resulting in a publicly unpopular program closure of the state veterans home loan program at that time. With initial changes effected in the last Congress, Wisconsin's state veterans home loan program was reopened in July 2006. Under the Heroes Act, full funding will be available in 2010, with \$60 million available this year and \$80 million next year.

“Persistence and teamwork have led to this long-anticipated victory,” said Scocos. “Congressman Ron Kind's amendment and the unanimous and long-standing support of every member of Wisconsin's Congressional delegation will help ensure the stability of Wisconsin's home loan program and its ability to meet the needs of Wisconsin's veterans for generations to come.”

“Particularly now with the credit crisis our country is experiencing, this program is incredibly important to making the dream of homeownership a reality for Wisconsin veterans,” said Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI), in a statement issued following the bill's 403-0 passage Tuesday by the U.S. House of Representatives. The bill unanimously passed the U.S. Senate on Thursday, clearing the way for it to be sent to the White House.

“The changes contained in the current legislation will help ensure that Wisconsin's state veterans home loan can continue, and build on two earlier expansions enacted during the last Congress through the exceptional work of Rep. Paul Ryan (R-WI) and the unanimous and longstanding support of every member of Wisconsin's Congressional delegation,” said Scocos.

Currently, 30-year fixed-rate state veterans home mortgage loans are available at 5.75% interest, with only a five percent down payment required and no private mortgage insurance (PMI).

To be eligible, otherwise qualified veterans must be current Wisconsin residents and must be within 25 years of their discharge under honorable conditions from military service.

More information is available from any of Wisconsin's 72 county veterans service officers, participating lenders, or the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs www.WisVets.com/loans or toll-free, 1-800-WIS-VETS / 1-800-947-8387).

Public Television is Searching for Wisconsin Vietnam War Veterans to Tell Their Stories



The following information was received from:
Wisconsin Dept. of Veterans Affairs and Wisconsin Historical Foundation.



Mik Derks from Wisconsin Public Television is planning to film a documentary on Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans. Public Television has previously filmed and aired documentaries on World War II and Korean Veterans from Wisconsin. Both were a huge success and are being modeled in other states.

scheduled to debut in the Spring of 2010.

Attached is a form for Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans to complete and forward to Mik Derks. Mik will schedule listening sessions and then set up interviews to be taped for the film over the course of the next year.

The Vietnam Veterans film will be two to three hours long with each segment being an hour. There may possibly be a forth segment. The film is

I have heard the over all plan that is in the works to honor Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans in conjunction with the debut of this film. It will be exciting. More information will follow.

Vietnam War Stores - Information Sheet

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone Number / E-mail: _____

Branch of Service: _____

Outfit: _____

Job: _____

Dates of Service: _____

Locations of Service: _____

Did you see combat? _____ Wounded? _____

Notable Experiences: _____

Do you have photos or film of your time in the service? _____

Of What Nature? _____

RETURN TO: MIK DERKS
WISCONSIN PUBLIC TELEVISION
821 UNIVERSITY AVE
MADISON WI 53706

FOR THE PRIVATE USE OF WISCONSIN PUBLIC TELEVISION IN CONNECTION WITH WISCONSIN VIETNAM WAR STORIES PROJECT. THIS INFORMATION WILL NOT BE MADE PUBLIC.

Traditional Veterans Plates to be Re-Issued

The following information was received Representative Terry Musser
rep.musser@legis.wi.gov



MADISON...Many veterans were surprised by the new look of the veterans license plates when the renewal forms arrived in the mail. The traditional red, white and blue design had been changed. According to State Representative Terry Musser (R-Melrose), veterans from around the state have contacted him saying they want the old design back.

Musser introduced legislation (AB518) to change the plate design back to the traditional red, white and blue favored by so many Wisconsin veterans. During deliberations in the Assembly Committee on Transportation, it was decided to negotiate the design change with the WI Department of Transportation (DOT), avoiding the sometimes lengthy process of enacting a new law.

Musser now considers the basic negotiations complete. He summarizes the process of applying for the slightly modified traditional red, white and blue plate as follows:

If you are still to receive the new plates, you will get the new design in the mail, until June 30, 2008. You are urged to accept the plate and pay the fees as usual.

If you like the new plates that were sent to you, no special steps need to be taken.

As of July 1, 2008, the slightly modified traditional plate will be re-issued. If you want the traditional plate again, you will need to request it from DOT and send them \$10. The DOT will not send information to you. It will be up to each veteran to apply for the newly issued red, white and blue plate.

If you are applying for a veterans plate for the first time, you will receive the new plates until June 30, and the traditional plates beginning July 1.

To apply for the traditional plates you can visit: <http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/drivers/vehicles/plates/replaceplate.htm>. Choose form MV2118. Fill out the form, choose the 'military' option, and enclose the \$10 fee. The application should be mailed after July 1 to: Wisconsin Department of Transportation, P.O. Box 7949, Madison, WI 53707-7949.

Your new plates will have a new number unless your plates are personalized. In that case you will keep your personalized plate number. If you have questions on the process, you can call DOT at (608) 266-1466.

Representative Musser welcomes your views on this or any state issue and may be contacted at State Capitol - Room 11 West, Madison WI 53702, 1-888-534-0092 or rep.musser@legis.wi.gov

August 9-10, 2008 Iola Vintage Military and Gun Show with Vintage Tractors and Equipment

The following information is from Iola Vintage Military & Gun Show / Old Working Wheels



WHEN: August 9th & 10th 2008

WHERE: Iola Old Car Show Grounds
Iola WI

ADMISSION for SPECTATORS:

Adults—\$6.00
Children 6 to 12—\$4.00
Children Under 6—FREE

PARKING is FREE

Enter the grounds through Gate #6,
located on Highway 161

ACTIVITIES

- ◆ Working Machines & Equipment
- ◆ Blood Drive on Friday
- ◆ Battle Reenactments:
 1. *Saturday A.M. Only*
Vietnam Era, "Fire in the Sky"
 2. *Saturday & Sunday P.M.*
WWII Era
- ◆ U.S.O. Type Show with
"Chicago Honey Bear Dancers"
- ◆ Parade of Military Vehicles
- ◆ Genuine G.I. Breakfast of S.O.S.
- ◆ Speakers

FOOD SERVICE

- 11:00 A.M.—9:00 P.M. - (Friday)
- 7:00 A.M.—9:00 P.M. - (Saturday)
- 7:00 A.M.—5:00 P.M. - (Sunday)

Motel Accommodations:

- ◆ Best Western Grand Season Hotel:
715-258-9212
- ◆ Comfort Inn & Suites 715-942-0500
- ◆ Village Inn 715-258-8526
- ◆ Iola Norseman House 715-445-3300
- ◆ Other: Contact Vintage Military Show
office: 715-445-4005

Legion Family Members Helping Legion Family Members

The following information was received from <http://www.legion.org/veterans/assistance/nef>



Our Preamble to The American Legion Constitution says it best, "...devotion to mutual helpfulness." This phrase is more than just mere words on paper; it's our pledge of support to our distressed comrades. Since the early 1920's, The American Legion has been actively involved in meeting the needs of both the community and individual Legion family members in the wake of disaster.

Hurricanes, tornadoes, earthquakes, wildfires...The American Legion National Emergency Fund was born out of natural disasters to compassionately heal the wounds of catastrophe and help save their homes. A major disaster could happen to any Legionnaire in any town at anytime and make them homeless.

The National Emergency Fund has provided over \$6,000,000 in direct financial assistance to Legion family members and posts. The National Emergency Fund has kept posts from closing and enabled Legion family members to begin to rebuild their homes and their lives.

Eligibility Criteria:

1. Eligibility open to Legionnaires and Sons of The American Legion members (up to \$1,500) Legion posts (up to \$5,000).
2. Not meant to replace or repair items, only to meet most immediate needs (i.e., temporary housing, food, water, clothing, diapers, etc.)
3. Does not cover insurance compensation or monetary losses from a business, structures on your property (barns, tool sheds, etc.,) equipment or vehicles.
4. Membership must be active at time of disaster and the time of application

How To Apply

1. Application must be received within 90 days of disaster.
2. Disaster must be a "declared" natural disaster for Legion family members.



3. Supporting data (photos, repair estimates, etc.) should be included if at all possible or statements (testimony) from post/district/department officers attesting to damages.
4. Only one grant per household.
5. Post grants must derive from a declared natural disaster and substantiating documentation must provide that The American Legion Post will cease to perform the duties and activities in the community due to losses sustained.

Members must complete a National Emergency Fund Grant Application. Applications may be obtained by contacting your Department Headquarters or by calling The American Legion National Headquarters at (317) 630-1321. You can also download a grant application by going to www.legion.org/veterans/assistance/nef.

Application is properly completed by applicant then sent to the department headquarters for approval.

If everything is in order, department will forward to National. Upon approval at the National level, a check will be sent to the Department Headquarters for delivery to the Legion Family member or Post in distress.

How You Can Help

We have an obligation to assist those less fortunate members when the need arises, and **we do** – through our donations to the National Emergency Fund. All contributions made to this fund are deposited in a special account and are used exclusively to meet our member's most urgent needs. Not one single contribution dollar is used for fundraising, administrative costs or fulfillment.

The money in the fund comes by way of generous donations from Legionnaires, American Legion Auxiliary members and Sons of The American Legion members.

Send your tax-Deductible Contributions To:

The American Legion
National Emergency Fund
P. O. BOX 6141
Indianapolis, Indiana 46206

[Donate to the National Emergency Fund today!](#)

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

