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(South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs)

SD Department of Veterans Affairs
Secretary Zimmerman April 2018 Column

Working Together, South Dakota May Gain a State Veterans Cemetery

The 2018 Legislative Session is one that will go down in history. Veterans Service Organizations, legislators, Sioux Falls community leaders, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA), and the Governor came together to secure passage of legislation to authorize SDDVA to establish and maintain a state veteran's cemetery in Sioux Falls. A dignified final-resting place to honor veterans and eligible dependents which will express the State's gratitude for their service to this country.

Senate Bill 91 (SB91), when introduced, had 104 sponsors and when approved in its final format in the House and the Senate Chambers passed on votes of 64-0 and 34-0 respectively.

SDDVA will be working with the National Cemetery Administration to seek a grant to fund the design and construction of the cemetery. SB91 authorizes SDDVA to submit the grant pre-application prior to July 1, 2018.

State veteran's cemeteries established under the VA grant program must conform to various standards and guidelines. SDDVA will be working close with State Engineers and the VA to ensure South Dakota's design conforms with these standards.

A great partner in this project is the city of Sioux Falls. The city has agreed to donate the land for the development of the state cemetery.

Perhaps President Lincoln gave us all the boost we needed, "To care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan."

To all that supported the first-step in this endeavor, a big heartfelt "thank you."

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs