



South Dakota Department of the Military
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs



SUCCESSFUL LEGISLATIVE SESSION FOR VETERANS

With one day remaining in the 2015 South Dakota Legislative Session (Veto Day), this session can be termed a success for South Dakota’s veterans.

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) sought passage of three bills this year, senate bills 33, 34 and 35. Senate Bill 33 extends resident tuition eligibility to spouses and children of active duty personal and of qualifying veterans. As part of Gov. Daugaard’s red tape initiative, senate bills 34 and 35 repealed unnecessary, obsolete, and outdated statutes.

Although the Department only introduced three bills, the Legislature approved numerous bills to enhance the lives of South Dakota’s veterans. These bills:

- Expanded veterans preference in employment to school districts, the state, counties and municipalities;
- Revised the state definition of veteran to include members of the armed forces reserves and South Dakota National Guard;
- Amended requirements that vehicle owners must satisfy before applying for military plates; and
- Added a requirement that SDDVA hire veterans for field officer and veterans service officer positions.

“The commitment and support of South Dakota legislators was evidenced by the votes in which all these bills passed,” said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs.

“We thank all of those that brought forward legislation, those that testified and those that continue to support our mission to be the voice for South Dakota’s veterans,” said Zimmerman. We encourage all veterans to contact their county or tribal veterans service officer (<http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso>) to learn more about their benefits.

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SD AIRMAN OF THE YEAR SERVES WITH PURPOSE

An Airman who possesses determination and a passion for her career field has been recognized as exceptional in her dedication to the mission of the South Dakota Air National Guard.

Senior Airman Jorrie Hart, 114th Security Forces Squadron installation controller, was selected as the 2014 South Dakota Air National Guard Outstanding Airman of the Year, which recognizes superior leadership, job performance, community involvement and personal achievements.

Hart attributes her assertiveness to observing her father's passion toward his careers in the Army and in sales as she was growing up. She enrolled in forensic science college courses that started two weeks after she graduated from Canton High School in 2009. Law enforcement and serving the public is something Hart is very passionate about. She didn't take time off for the summer because of her determination to accomplish her goals as soon as possible.

Two years into college, Hart enlisted into the South Dakota Air National Guard in the Security Forces career field. She spent her free time at technical school practicing and performing on the drill team and earned the top leadership position as lead black rope before graduation. After returning home from training, she attained her current position with the Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office as an Air Guard security officer. This position required her to attend the Law Enforcement Standards Course in Pierre where she graduated to become a State Certified Law Enforcement Officer.

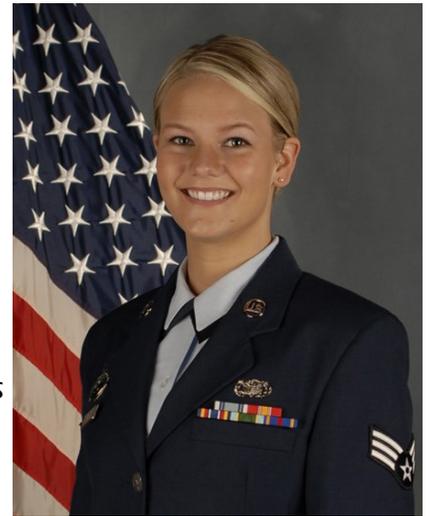
Hart is motivated to get the most out of her profession, which reflects in her expressed desire to take on more training opportunities within the SFS and sheriff's office. Aside from her deputy duties, becoming a valued member on the Security Response Team in her primary role and attaining a bachelor's degree in Forensic Science at Colorado Technical University, Hart has continued to add additional duties.

Her first additional duty was assuming the role of a trainer for the Portable Explosive Trace Detector, which is designed for checkpoint and transportation security. She is one of only two people in the squadron who have administration control over the explosives and narcotics detection device.

Hart was also selected by the deputies Air Guard supervisor to attend Pressure Point Control Tactics class in Texas. Completing the PPCT class allows her to instruct her colleagues in the SFS and sheriff's office on these skills.

Her shooting scores are some of the best in the squadron and a skill that gives her much pride. She was selected, along with two others, for having the highest qualification scores throughout the squadron. With this selection she acquired the Advanced Combat Optical Gun-sight device on her rifle, which is a compact riflescope for use in bright to low/no light and it enables her to qualify yearly on long range shots up to 600 yards.

Her AOY package now moves on to the national level to compete against her peers to become one of the final 12 AOY. The Air Force Association honors the final 12 Outstanding Airmen at its annual convention in Washington and if chosen they would join the ranks of the 763 named Outstanding Airmen of the Year since the program's inception in 1956.



SIoux FALLS NG UNIT TO DEPLOY TO KUWAIT

The South Dakota Army National Guard's 196th Maneuver Enhancement Brigade has received an alert order for possible mobilization to Kuwait in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

Thirty-nine soldiers from the Sioux Falls-based unit are scheduled for deployment in the February 2016 timeframe. While in Kuwait, the soldiers will conduct force protection and security operations. The unit will report to Fort Bliss, Texas, to complete several weeks of theater-specific training prior to deployment overseas. This will be the second mobilization for the 196th, which deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in 2010-2011.

15 SD EMPLOYERS RECOGNIZED

Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a Department of Defense (DoD) office, announces 15 South Dakota employers of Guard and Reserve employees have been nominated for the 2015 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award.

The Freedom Award is the highest recognition given by the DoD to employers for their support of National Guard and Reserve members. On behalf of the Secretary of Defense, ESGR runs the annual award program, which has presented the honor to 205 employers since 1996.

Almost half of the U.S. military is made up of National Guard and Reserve members, many of whom also hold jobs with civilian employers. The Freedom Award recognizes those employers that provide the most outstanding support for these Citizen Warriors. Up to 15 employers will be selected for this year's award and honored at the Pentagon in an official ceremony in August.

Nominations for the Freedom Award must come from a Guard or Reserve member who is employed by the organization they are nominating, or from a family member. This year's nominees (complete list available at <http://www.freedomaward.mil/TemplateDetailsView.aspx?TemplateID=6406&ModuleID=7>) represent large and small employers from almost every industry, including health, transportation, hospitality, entertainment, banking, service and security (just to name a few), as well as from state and local governments. ESGR received nominations for employers in all 50 states, Guam-CNMI, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands and the District of Columbia.

Semifinalists and finalists will be announced in sequence throughout the coming months with the recipients being announced in late June. Updates, press releases and a complete list of the 2,960 nominees can be found at www.freedomaward.mil.

2015 Freedom Award Nominations from South Dakota:

South Dakota State University	Nygren's True Value
Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office	Landmark Aviation
Dakota Valley Community School District	True North Steel
SDN Communications	Sioux Falls Fire Rescue
Daktronics	Liberty Elementary School
Black Hills Corporation	Redfield Energy
eProvider Solutions	Crary Law Firm
South Dakota Highway Patrol	

NATIONAL ALA PRESIDENT VISITS SOUTH DAKOTA

National American Legion President Janet Jefford toured western South Dakota this week during a stopover in her year-long nationwide tour to call on community members.

Jefford had the opportunity to learn about veteran support efforts in South Dakota, including tours of the VA Black Hills Health Care System at Fort Meade and Hot Springs, Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home, Ellsworth Air Force Base, Black Hills State University Veterans Center and the Cornerstone Rescue Mission. She also toured Mount Rushmore National Monument and Crazy Horse Memorial.

South Dakota American Legion Auxiliary President Carol Edwards said "South Dakota American Legion Auxiliary was excited to welcome President Jefford to our beautiful State. We provided her with an opportunity to see the care and concern our veterans receive at our health care facilities as well as the support they receive in our communities."

SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman joined President Jefford when she toured Ellsworth Air Force Base and the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. "Commander Jefford is a great ambassador for veterans across the country," said Zimmerman. "She cares deeply about our veterans and their families."

Zimmerman was excited to show Jefford the progress that has been made on the construction of the new home.

During her visit, the leader of America's largest women's patriotic service organization visited with veterans and active duty personnel, toured facilities, placed wreaths at the National Cemetery, and learned about local American Legion family efforts to support active duty, military families and veterans. She also attended receptions hosted by local American Legion Auxiliary Units in Box Elder, Piedmont, Deadwood, Lead and Rapid City.

Janet Jefford, of Manchester, Conn., was elected national president of the American Legion Auxiliary (ALA) during the organization's 94th National Convention in August 2014. Jefford, a 45-year member, joined the American Legion Auxiliary through her father William Lucas, a WWII Army veteran. She is also eligible through her son Jeff, a Desert Storm Army veteran. Jefford exemplifies the ALA's motto of *Service Not Self* by actively volunteering in her community and with other service organizations.

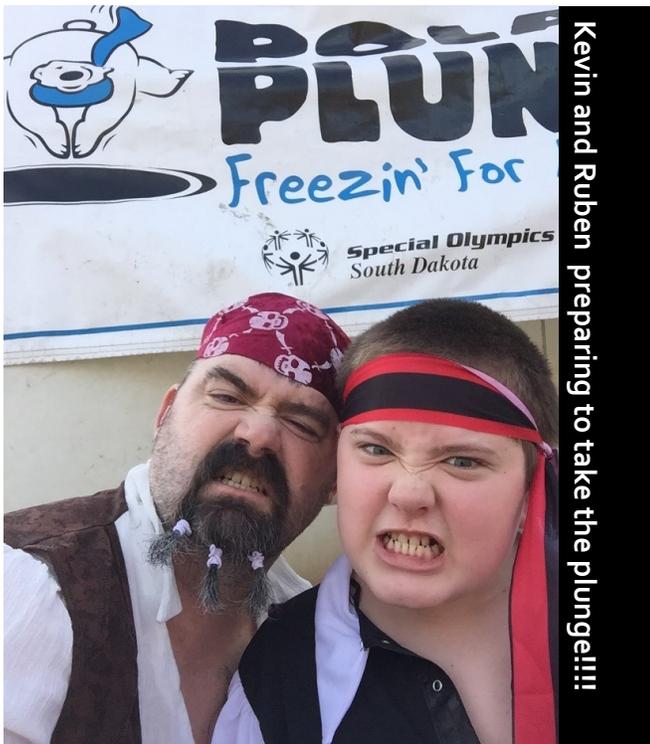


National ALA President Janet Jefford



NALA President Jefford, EAFB Commander Kennedy and SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman

SWASHBUCKLERS TAKE THE PLUNGE



Kevin and Ruben preparing to take the plunge!!!!

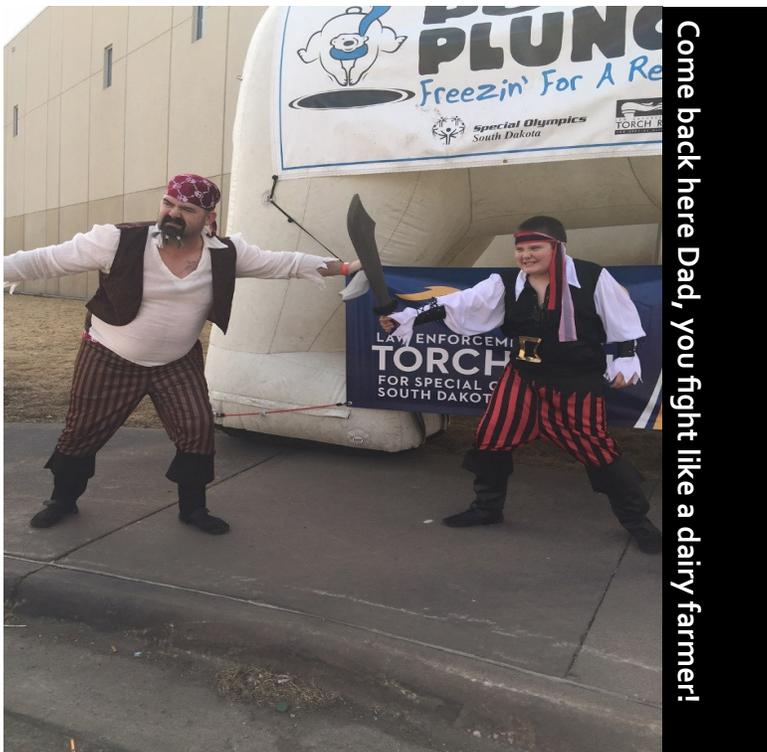
Over \$4,000 was raised Sunday during the annual Special Olympics Polar Plunge in Pierre.

There were many brave souls that took the plunge either individually or in groups. And taking the plunge is what SDDVA Field Officer Kevin Bowen did — in more ways than one. Jumping is one way he takes the plunge, but another way is the plunge he takes when he selects his outfit!!!! Bowen has been known to dress up as a prom queen, hula dancer, Popeye, and now, a pirate!!!!

Although the entry fee is \$100, Bowen raised

\$250 to participate in the jump. This year, Kevin's son Ruben joined him in the jump and the pre-staging activities were very entertaining!!!!.

Great Job Kevin and Ruben!.



Come back here Dad, you fight like a dairy farmer!



BLACK HILLS VETERANS' JOB FAIR

The 2015 Black Hills Veterans' Job Fair will be held on Wednesday, June 24, at Western Dakota Technical Institute in Rapid City from 12:30 - 5:00.

Both the employer and job seeker flyers are included here for your review..

Registration has just opened and already there are 30 employers registered to attend from South Dakota, Nebraska. and WY. Last year there were approximately 100 employers/service providers and 300 job seekers. One company hired 13 candidates from the job fair!

SDDVA will have a presence at this event and will be prepared to assist veterans with questions they may have regarding services and benefits.



Black Hills Veterans' Job Fair

We invite you to attend the Black Hills Veterans' Job Fair. This **FREE** job fair puts an emphasis on hiring Guard and Reserve members, veterans, active duty military and their families.

This is a military-focused job fair providing access to military members and veterans who bring unique abilities and experiences to the civilian workforce. Today's veterans bring coveted skills to employers such as leadership, teamwork, accountability and responsibility.

When: June 24th from 12:30 PM - 5:00 PM
 Set-up: 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM
 Job Fair: 12:30 PM - 5:00 PM

Where: Western Dakota Technical Institute
 800 Mickelson Dr.
 Rapid City, SD 57703



A PROGRAM BY:  Yellow Ribbon Reintegration Program
 For Those Who Serve and Those Who Support™

Please return attached registration to Kara Palmer by June 5, 2015
 kara.palmer@state.sd.us or 605-394-4066




Black Hills Veterans' Job Fair

We invite you to attend the Black Hills Veterans' Job Fair. This **FREE** job fair puts an emphasis on connecting Guard and Reserve members, veterans, active duty military and their families with employers locally and abroad.

To help you prepare, the South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation will be hosting a one hour job fair workshop which will cover the basics of resume writing, interviewing, and how to prepare for a job fair.

Job Fair Preparation Classes - RSVP Required
When: June 15th
 First Session: 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM
 Second Session: 11:30 AM - 12:30 PM
Where: 2330 N. Maple Ave., Rapid City, SD

Job Fair
When: June 24th 12:30 PM - 5:00 PM
Where: Western Dakota Technical Institute
 800 Mickelson Dr., Rapid City, SD



RSVP to Kara Palmer by June 8, 2015
 kara.palmer@state.sd.us or 605-394-4066



Black Hills Veterans' Job Fair
Registration Wednesday, June 24th
12:30 PM - 5:00 PM
Western Dakota Tech

Company Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

POC Phone#: _____ POC Email: _____

Email _____

Recruiters Email _____

Description of Company _____

Additional Comments _____

Please check what you will need for your booth:

- One Booth without Electricity
- One Booth with Electricity
- Double booth without Electricity
- Double booth with Electricity

*Two chairs and one table (6x2, no pipe and drape).
Booths with electricity are limited and will be given in order of registration.*

-Limited booth space available
Booth space assigned in order of registration - If you are not checked in by 12:00 PM on June 24th your space may be given to another vendor.

Send Registrations to kara.palmer@state.sd.us or
call 605-394-4066 if you have any questions



VA ELIMINATES NET WORTH AS HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY FACTOR

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is updating the way it determines eligibility for VA health care, a change that will result in more Veterans having access to the health care benefits they've earned and deserve.

Effective 2015, VA eliminated the use of net worth as a determining factor for both health care programs and copayment responsibilities. This change makes VA health care benefits more accessible to lower-income Veterans and brings VA policies in line with Secretary Robert A. McDonald's MyVA initiative which reorients VA around Veterans' needs.

"Everything that we do and every decision we make has to be focused on the Veterans we serve," said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. "We are working every day to earn their trust. Changing the way we determine eligibility to make the process easier for Veterans is part of our promise to our Veterans."

Instead of combining the sum of Veterans' income with their assets to determine eligibility for medical care and copayment obligations, VA will now only consider a Veteran's gross household income and deductible expenses from the previous year. Elimination of the consideration of net

worth for VA health care enrollment means that certain lower-income, non-service-connected Veterans will have less out-of-pocket costs. Over a 5-year period, it is estimated that 190,000 Veterans will become eligible for reduced costs of their health care services.

In March 2014, VA eliminated the annual requirement for updated financial information. VA now uses information from the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration to automatically match individual Veterans' income information which reduces the burden on Veterans to keep their healthcare eligibility up to date. That change better aligned VA's health care financial

assessment program with other federal health care organizations.

Veterans may submit updated income information at www.1010ez.med.va.gov/, or by visiting their nearby VA health care facility. For more information, visit www.va.gov/healthbenefits or call VA toll-free at 1-877-222-VETS (8387).



Upcoming Events

- Mar. 20—VA Veterans Town Hall—American Legion Post 8—Pierre 2:0 pm
 Mar. 25—DOL Brookings Job Fair—Days Inn—2500 E. 6th Street—Noon—5:30 pm
 Mar. 26—DOL Yankton Job Fair—Technical Education Center—1200 W. 21st Street—2:00 pm—6:00 pm
 Mar. 28-30 Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Celebrations
 Mar. 29—Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Program—Pierre—1:00 pm
 Mar. 31—DOL Watertown Job Fair—County Fair Banquet Hall—14 2nd St SE—1:30 pm—5:30 pm
 Apr. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
 Apr. 15—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting (DAV—Sioux Falls) 10:00 am
 Apr. 23—ICVCSF Conference—Aberdeen
 Apr 24—ISVCSF Conference—Yankton
 May 5—SDDVA Mini Conference—Sturgis (Veterans Club—868 Main Street) —10:00 am (MT)
 May 6—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pierre (Post 8 American Legion—520 S. Pierre Street) —10:00 am
 May 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—Sioux Falls (VA Regional Office) —9:00 am
 Jun. 18-21—VFW State Convention—Yankton, SD
 Jun. 24—Black Hills Job Fair—Western Dakota Tech—Rapid City—12:30—5:00 pm (MT)
 Jun.. 25-28—American Legion 97th Annual State Convention—Huron Crossroads Convention Center
 Jul. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)
 Aug. 5-9—AVIT Traveling Vietnam Wall Comes to Sioux Falls
 Aug. 24-27—SDDVA Annual Benefit School—Ramkota—Pierre
 Oct. 9—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)

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