



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



STATE VETERANS HOME STAFF RECOGNIZED

The Great Plains Quality Innovation Network awarded the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home with the “Gold Milestone,” an award that recognizes the outstanding achievements and efforts to improve the quality of care and quality of life for veterans home residents.

“This award is a culmination of all departments at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home coming together as a team striving for excellence,” said Superintendent Brad Richardson.

Great Plains QIN works with healthcare providers and communities to implement data-driven quality initiatives to improve healthcare. They offer technical assistance, tailored education, best practices, tools and resources. Through these efforts, they work with the MJFSVH staff to improve patient safety, reduce harm and improve clinical care.

The QIO Program, one of the largest federal programs dedicated to improving health quality for Medicare beneficiaries, is an integral part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) National Quality Strategy for providing better care and better health. By law, the mission of the QIO Program is to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, economy and quality of services delivered to Medicare beneficiaries.

“The state home has a great team of professionals,” said Larry Zimmerman, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. “They have panned some ‘gold’ by coming together and being an outstanding lineup that pressed their way to the top.”

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MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY ZIMMERMAN

Happy New Year everyone! We wish you a terrific 2017 filled with happiness and good fortune. Brad Paisley once said, "Tomorrow is the first blank page of a 365-page book. Write a good one."

Let's ensure that our 2017 book is not left blank! Let's write a good one!

Our 2016 book was full of projects, accomplishments and stories. During 2016 we honored over 1,000 Korean War Veterans, we helped Vietnam War Veterans celebrate the tenth anniversary of the dedication of their memorial, participated in numerous welcome home and outreach events, and opened the doors to a new state-of-the-art veteran's home. We partnered with the Department of the Military to create South Dakota Joining Forces; an initiative to grow community support for veterans, service members and their families. We improved veteran's preference status, provided numerous training programs for our county and tribal veteran's service officers, assisted incarcerated veterans, served on committees for Veterans Courts and increased the number of nursing home beds at the State Veterans Home. In addition, our staff worked closely with veterans to secure over \$170 Million in compensation and pension benefits for veterans.

Each year we set new priorities to reflect the needs of all generations of veterans. As always, we encourage veterans to contact their local County or Tribal Veterans Service Officer to determine eligibility of benefits.

How many of you buy books, gadgets, or tools, only to let them sit on the shelf - never to be used? Of course you don't! But according to our records, only 2,300 veterans in South Dakota are using their GI Bill benefits and the On-the-Job Training and Apprenticeship program. The result for those not using the benefit is that 36 months of education they have paid for is sitting on the shelf unused. That education benefit is part of what veterans earned for their service so why not collect it and use it? Why not add a chapter to your book?

As a veteran you have shown you have the talents to get things done under difficult circumstances. Build on that by picking up the right tools and improving what you have. Veterans from Vietnam Era, Post 9/11 and Gulf War Era should give our team a call and visit with them about education benefits, free tuition and housing allowances (605-773-3269).

We truly enjoy interacting with veterans, service members, and their families throughout our great state. We have tremendous partners at federal, state, and local levels who work tirelessly to ensure great outcomes. We are all here to work with our veterans.

Let's make sure our 2017 book has numerous pages and is a best seller. Keep the book open and continue to add chapters to your journal.



Larry Zimmerman, Secretary
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs

SDDVA'S ROUSSELLE COMMISSIONED AS A U.S. ARMY SECOND LIEUTENANT



SDDVA's State Veterans Service Officer Tyler Rousselle, was commissioned as a U.S. Army Second Lieutenant in a ceremony on December 30, 2016. The ceremony was held at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice South Dakota Veterans Home.

Second Lieutenant Rousselle served in the United States Marine Corps from 2005-2011 and joined the South Dakota Army National Guard in 2013. He received his commission in 2016 through the Black Hills State University Reserve Officer Training Program.

Tyler is a native of Huntington Beach, California, and relocated to the Custer area with his family.

SECRETARY ZIMMERMAN FINDS PARTNERSHIP WITH BLACK HILLS AREA HABITAT FOR HUMANITY

SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman is working with the Black Hills Area Habitat for Humanities (BHH) on a project/partnership to help South Dakota veterans.

Some of the guiding principles of Black Hills Habitat are focus on shelter, advocate for affordable housing and support sustainable and transformational development.

BHH's goal is for all people to live in decent, durable shelter. They build, renovate or preserve homes, by partnering with others to accelerate and broaden access to affordable housing as a foundation for breaking the cycle of poverty.

BHH promotes decent, affordable housing for all, and they support the global community's commitment to housing as a basic human right.

View <http://www.blackhillshabitat.org/> for more information about Black Hills Area Habitat for Humanity.



Upcoming Events

2017

- Jan. 10 - Governor's State of the State Address—1:00 pm (CT)
Jan. 11—SDDVA/Veterans Council Legislative Reception—5:00 pm—8:00 pm (CT)
Jan. 12—SD Veterans Commission Meeting—American Legion Post 8—Pierre—9:00 am (CT)
Jan. 30—VFW Legislative Reception—AmericInn—Fort Pierre
Feb. 1—American Legion Legislative Reception—American Legion Post 8 Cabin—Pierre (520 S. Pierre Street) - 5:30 pm (CT)
Feb. 4—Valentines for Veterans Concert—Sioux Falls Washington Pavilion—3:00 pm (CT)
Feb 10-12—SD American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Oacoma
April 19—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
Jun 15-18—SD American Legion State Conference—Watertown
Aug. 14-17—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre—Ramkota

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