



**SOUTH DAKOTA
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South Dakota Joining Forces

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs has selected Erin Bultje to serve as the executive director of South Dakota Joining Forces (SDJF).

Bultje will provide program development, oversight and coordination for the Joining Forces Initiative. She will enhance the state's ability to meet the behavioral-health care needs of its service members, veterans and their families by increasing access to appropriate care, closing gaps, building the system's capacity, increasing interagency communication and building collaboration.

"Through past wars and conflicts, we have been building the footings that are part of our history," said Larry Zimmerman, Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. "Military personnel, veterans and family members deserve an entity to help them locate the assistance they need. Erin Bultje will take these footings and build the foundation block that will communicate, solidify, and create a network of resources for our 276,000 members of this exclusive group. She has the expertise to give that large contingency a place to find resolution for information."

Bultje, an Army Veteran with five years of active duty service, served overseas as part of the 1st Armored Division out of Wiesbaden, Germany. After her tour of duty, she received her Associates of Arts degree in Radio/Television Broadcasting and then her Bachelors of Science in Business Management.

"Service in any branch of the military has both inherent risks and rewards," said Erin Bultje. "This Initiative will help our veterans, service members and their families navigate the maze of programs and services to get them through the right door at the right time. I look forward to continuing my journey to enhance the lives of our veterans."

Watch for the release of the new website: www.SDJF.sd.gov.

Bultje can be reached at erin.bultje@state.sd.us or 605.295.8180.