



South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs  
Soldiers and Sailors Building  
425 E. Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-8242 Fax: 605-773-5380  
<http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**For more information, contact:** Audry Ricketts (South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs) at 605-773-8242 or [audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us)

**SDDVA Secretary Whitlock's April Column – Hitting the Road**

As the newly appointed Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs, I spent most of January through March in Pierre discovering and learning our role during legislative session. With the introduction of 584 bills and resolutions, we monitored 37 bills that were military and veteran oriented. In my June column I will highlight the veteran related changes that will be effective July 1.

With session behind me, I have hit the road and begun visiting county and tribal veterans service officers (VSOs). My goal is to visit all 66 county and nine tribal offices. Collectively, the VSOs file, on an average of 450 veterans claims per month. In our effort to enhance the lives of our veterans we need to be kept abreast of the challenges, and the roadblocks, our veterans are facing. Visiting the VSOs will provide me an overview of those issues and guide me in developing a battle plan.

I encourage all veterans, and their families, to visit their respective county or tribal veterans service officer. They should always be your first point of contact. We have posted a link on our website to assist you in locating the VSO located nearest you:  
<https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx>.

Our Department exists for one clear purpose: to repay our Nation's debt of gratitude to its veterans each and every day. Serving America's veterans by providing them timely access to benefits and quality care; from the day they first take their oaths of allegiance until the day they are laid to rest.

America's veterans are the pride of our nation. They have fought our wars, defended our shores, and kept us free. At the end of each day, our true measure of success will be the timeliness, the quality, and the consistency of the services and support we provide. We will be measured by our accomplishments, not our promises. Our veterans deserve nothing less.

Greg Whitlock, Secretary  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs