



NEWSLETTER

SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF THE MILITARY



STATE VETERANS HOME TEAM PURPLES UP

We want to extend a heartfelt shout out to our team at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home for their outstanding support during *Purple Up! For Military Kids Day*. While their unwavering dedication to the veterans in our care is something we celebrate every day, it's especially meaningful to see them go above and beyond to recognize and support military children as well.

By proudly participating in *Purple Up! Day*, our team helped shine a light on the strength and sacrifices of military kids — the often unsung heroes of our nation's military families. Their willingness to stand in solidarity, show their colors, and honor these resilient young people reflects the heart and character of the community we have here.

Thank you to each and every staff member for not only caring for our veterans, but also for embracing opportunities to uplift those connected to military service in every way. Their kindness and commitment make a difference, and we're proud to have them on our team.

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HUNTIMER ATTENDS VFW DISTRICT 10 MEETING

South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs Appeals and Training Manager David Huntimer attended the recent VFW District 10 meeting and installation of officers.

Huntimer provided a brief update on veterans benefits and services, took time to answer questions from attendees, and connected with veterans one-on-one following the meeting.

Events like these are a vital opportunity to strengthen partnerships, listen to the needs of our veterans, and ensure they have access to the resources and support they've earned.

Thank you to VFW District 10 for the warm welcome and for your continued commitment to serving those who served.



SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS COUNCIL ELECTS NEW LEADERSHIP

During their meeting this week, the South Dakota Veterans Council elected new leadership. Anna Arnold (VFW) was elected president and Marty Pennock (DAV) was elected vice president. Both resumed their duties during the conclusion of the meeting.

The Council heard reports from the VA leadership, SDDVA, the congressional offices, and the service organizations. They also did a review of the 2025 legislative session and asked members for legislative ideas for the 2026 session.

The next Council meeting is scheduled for July 16.

SDDVA TO PARTICIPATE IN UPCOMING VETERANS STAND DOWNS ACROSS SD

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) will be participating in several upcoming Veterans Stand Down events throughout the region. These gatherings provide vital services and resources to veterans, including health screenings, benefit assistance, housing information, and peer support.

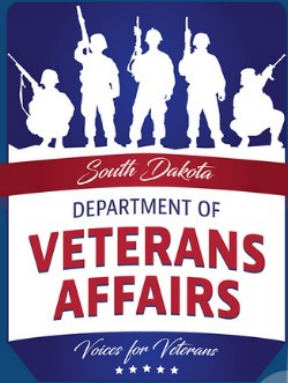
In partnership with the VA Black Hills Health Care System (VABHHCS) Homeless Veteran Program and other community partners, SDDVA will be on-site to connect with veterans and their families at the following locations:

- Standing Rock Stand Down May 22, 2025 | 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (CT) Grand River Casino, Mobridge
- Pine Ridge Stand Down June 6, 2025 | 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (MT) Pine Ridge Pow Wow Grounds
- Rosebud Stand Down July 24, 2025 | 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (CT) Sinte Gleska Multipurpose Building, Antelope
- Cheyenne River Stand Down August 21, 2025 | 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (MT) Eagle Butte Vet Center Building, Eagle Butte
- Rapid City Stand Down September 25, 2025 | 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. (MT) DoubleTree by Hilton Rapid City Downtown Convention Center, 505 N. 5th St.

These events are open to all veterans, offering an opportunity to access valuable resources and reconnect with fellow veterans in a supportive, welcoming environment. SDDVA encourages veterans and their families to attend and learn more about the benefits and services available to them.

For additional information, please contact SDDVA or visit your county and tribal veterans service offices.





JOIN OUR TEAM!

Michael J Fitzmaurice State Vets Home

TEXT 'CNA' TO 605-909-8350

Full-time and Part-Time CNA shifts available

Day, Evening, and Night* shifts

Up to \$22.92/hr*

Hot Springs, SD



Apply Online!
bhr.sd.gov/workforus/

Job Id 30140

EASTER ACTIVITIES AT STATE VETERANS HOME

The halls of the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home were filled with warmth, gratitude, and plenty of laughter this week, as residents, staff, and visitors came together to celebrate Easter.

The day kicked off with a lively Easter scavenger hunt. The residents were assisted by the dedicated team from the SDDVA Claims Office. Residents eagerly joined in the fun, searching for festive items and enjoying plenty of surprises along the way. The Claims Office staff, affectionately dubbed the "bunch earning their ears," did a fantastic job assisting residents with the hunt and ensuring everyone had a wonderful time.

The Bistro was bustling with activity as volunteers from the Hot Springs Elks Lodge, John and Karen Phelen, and Jane Benzel served treats and handed out candy bags, spreading Easter cheer to every resident.

One of the highlights of the day came courtesy of May Wicher, who brought in her live rabbits for residents to visit and hold — a heart-warming and memorable moment for many. "It was such a fun day!" Thank you to everyone who helped make it so special for our veterans.





PRESENTS



The South Dakota Department of Veteran Affairs will have two veterans service officers on-site all-day Wednesday, April 23, for the KELO Vietnam War Premier Video at the South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance. Great opportunity for our veterans to talk one-on-one with some of our subject matter experts!

PREMIERE VIDEO EVENT
WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23 @ 3:00 PM
SOUTH DAKOTA MILITARY HERITAGE ALLIANCE
PANEL DISCUSSION FOLLOWING SCREENING
FREE ADMISSION

SPONSORED LOCALLY BY

Pierre's
BODY SHOP, Inc.



VISN 23 TO HOST MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT

The VA will be hosting a VISN 23 Mental Health Summit on May 2, 2025. This year's theme, "Moral Injury Healing: Confronting the War Within," focuses on addressing the deep, often unseen wounds carried by many veterans and those who care for them.

The summit is free, virtual, and open to everyone — veterans, their supporters, VA staff, community partners, and healthcare professionals alike. The event will feature a robust agenda including insights from VISN leadership, a dedicated moral injury panel, and presentations from subject matter experts covering evidence-based treatments like Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Moral Injury (ACT-MI), Trauma Informed Guilt Reduction Therapy, and Building Spiritual Strength.

When: May 2, 2025, from 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. MT | 9:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. CT

Where: Virtual via Microsoft Teams

Continuing Education Units (CEUs) are available for eligible participants through multiple accrediting bodies.

Registration is now open — don't miss this important conversation centered on healing, support, and resilience for those impacted by moral injury.

[\[Click here to register.\]](#)

 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

VISN 23 Mental Health Summit

**MORAL INJURY HEALING:
CONFRONTING THE WAR WITHIN**



Register with QR Code:



Friday | May 2, 2025
8:30am - 2:00pm MT
9:30am - 3:00pm CT

VIRTUAL  SUMMIT **CEUs** for various disciplines

Hosted by VISN 23 Local Recovery Coordinators



BUDDY NIGHT

Friday, April 25th from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

State Vets Home, Minnekahta Ave

Hosted by Smokehouse Grill

Buddy Night is an opportunity for veterans, their families and friends and community members to connect over a casual night of food and fun.

Please join us, whether you are new to the community or a long-time resident...we'd love to have you!

Sponsored by Casting Vets in partnership with the Hot Springs Veterans Suicide Prevention Coalition.

Contact us for a ride at: info@castingvets.org or 605-846-3203



STANDING ROCK SIOUX TRIBE VETERANS STAND DOWN

THURSDAY, MAY 22, 2025

GRAND RIVER CASINO & RESORT

1000 HRS - 1400 HRS

(10AM - 2PM CST)

LUNCH WILL BE PROVIDED

RESOURCE FAIR AND OUTREACH EVENT FOR VETERANS.

VA PROGRAMS AND VA BENEFITS STAFF

WILL BE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER QUESTIONS.

**PLEASE BRING A COPY OF YOUR DD FORM 214, DEPENDENT
INFORMATION AND IDENTIFICATION TO THE EVENT.**

**DOCUMENTATION IS NEEDED SO
WE CAN FULLY SERVE YOU AND YOUR NEEDS.**

SERVICES OFFERED

**CLOTHING
LEGAL ASSISTANCE
READJUSTMENT COUNSELING**

**EMPLOYMENT SERVICES
VA BENEFITS
HOUSING REFERRALS**

MUCH MORE!

**POC: CLAUDETTE WALKING ELK, DIRECTOR
SRST DEPT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS (701) 854 8527**

**POC: VA BLACK HILLS
CLAY THOMPSON (605) 206 0046 clay.thompson@va.gov
CHELSEA TAKEN ALIVE (605) 490 1765 chelsea.takenalive@va.gov**



2025 UPCOMING EVENTS

Apr 18-21—State Offices Closed

Apr 25-26—State DAV Convention—AmericInn—Aberdeen

Apr 27-30—VFW Proficiency Training Conference—Annapolis, MD

May 1—Loyalty Day

May 6—Mission 24 Midwest Honor Flight Operation Welcome Home—Sioux Falls Arena—(1201 N. West Avenue)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (Doors open at 7:30 pm) (CT)

May 6—SDDVA Mini Conference—Pennington County Conference Room—(312 Kansas City St)—Rapid City—10:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)

May 7—SDDVA Mini Conference—Post 8 American Legion—(520 S. Pierre St)—Pierre—10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)

May 8—Victory in Europe Day

May 8—SDDVA Mini Conference—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St—Heritage Room)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)

May 9—Military Spouse Appreciation Day

May 17—Armed Forces Day

May 20—Mission 25 Midwest Honor Flight Operation Welcome Home—Sioux Falls Arena—(1201 N. West Avenue)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (Doors open at 7:30 pm) (CT)

May 22—Standing Rock Sioux Tribe Veterans Stand Down—Grand River Casino—Mobridge—10:00am (CT)

May 26—State Offices Closed—Memorial Day

May 26—SDDVA Memorial Day Program at State Veterans Cemetery—12:00 noon (CT)

Jun 3—Mission 26 Midwest Honor Flight Operation Welcome Home—Hawthorne Aviation—(5815 Mitchell Street #1207)—Sioux City, IA —9:30 pm (Doors open at 7:30 pm) (CT)

Jun 6—Pine Ridge Veterans Stand Down—Pine Ridge Pow Wow Grounds—10:00am (MT)

Jun 7—Rich Schild Memorial Poker Run—The Keg—Tabor—12:00 noon (CT)

Jun 10—MWHF Day of Sweetness—Chick-Fil-A—(4005 W. 41st Street)—Sioux Falls—6:30 am—10:00 pm (CT)

Jun 14—8th Annual MWHF Pars and Pubs—Downtown Sioux Falls—11:00 am—4:00 pm (CT)

Jun 19—State Offices Closed—Juneteenth Day

Jun 19-22—VFW State Convention—Ramkota—Pierre

Jun 19-22—American Legion State Conference—Huron

Jun 29—MWHF Honor Ride—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—1:00 pm (CT)

Jul 4—State Offices Closed—Fourth of July

Jul 14—Black Hills Tee it up for the Troops Tournament—Arrowhead Country Club—Rapid City

Jul 16—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Mitchell VFW Post—(215 N. Main Street)—Mitchell—1:00 pm (CT)

Jul 19—Veterans Information Day—BG Ernie Edwards Readiness Center—(1951 N. HWY 20)—Watertown—10:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)

Jul 24—Rosebud Sioux Tribe Veterans Stand Down—Sinte Gleska Multipurpose Building—Antelope—10:00am (CT)

Jul 26—3rd Annual Korean War Veterans Appreciation Day—Brookings Outdoor Adventure Center—(2810 22nd Avenue S)—Brookings—9:00 am—2:00 pm (CT)

Aug 4-5—Your Journey Matters 2025 Behavioral Health Conference—Sioux Falls Sheraton Convention Center

Aug 7—Purple Heart Day

Aug 9-13—National VFW Convention—Columbus, OH

Aug 11—Barrel House Day of Giving for Midwest Honor Flight—(4701 E. 54th Street)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—Midnight (CT)

(continued)

UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug 20—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—Virtual—1:00 pm (CT)
Aug 21—Cheyenne River Veterans Stand Down—Eagle Butte Vet Center Building—Eagle Butte—10:00am (MT)
Aug 27-Sep 1—South Dakota State Fair
Aug 28—Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair
Sep 1—State Offices Closed—Labor Day
Sep 9-12—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School
Sep 16—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Yankton VFW Post—(209 S. Cedar Street)—Yankton—1:00 pm (CT)
Sep 19—POW/MIA Day
Sep 21-25—NVS Accredited Representative Skill Training—Annapolis, MD
Sep 21-26—NVS Basic for New Accredited Representatives—Annapolis, MD
Sep 25—Rapid City Veterans Stand Down—DoubleTree by Hilton Rapid City Downtown Convention Center—
(505 N. 5th Street)—Rapid City—10:00am (MT)
Oct 13—State Offices Closed—Native American Day
Oct 15—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Virtual—1:00 pm (CT)
Oct 18—4th Annual Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—South Dakota Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell
Street)—Sioux Falls—7:00 pm
Nov 7—MWHF Bingo—Severance Brewing—(701 N. Phillips Avenue)—Sioux Falls—7:00—9:00 pm (CT)
Nov 8—Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair—Sturgis Community Center—(1401 Lazelle Street)—Sturgis—
11:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
Nov 10—Barrel House Day of Giving for the South Dakota Veterans Cemetery WAA—(4701 E. 54th Street)—Sioux
Falls—11:00 am—Midnight (CT)
Nov 11—State Offices Closed—Veterans Day
Nov 19—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV Headquarters (1519 W. 51st Street)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)
Nov 27—State Offices Closed—Thanksgiving
Nov 29—Side by Side MWHF Poker Run—Pilot Mikes Roadhouse—(4901 N. Ellis Road)—Sioux Falls—
11:00 am (CT)
Dec 2—Governor's Budget Address—SD State Capitol—1:00 pm (CT)
Dec 13—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—
11:00 am (CT)
Dec 25—State Offices Closed—Christmas Day

2026

Jan 13—South Dakota Legislative Session Opens
Jan 13—Governor's State of the State Address—SD State Capitol—1:00 pm (CT)
Jan 14—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion Post 8—(520 S. Pierre Street)—Pierre—2:00
pm (CT)
Jan 14—South Dakota Veterans Council Legislative Reception—American Legion Post 8—(520 S. Pierre Street)—
Pierre—5:30 pm—7:30 pm (CT)

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