



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



## SD GUARD DELIVERS WINTER CLOTHING TO THOSE IN NEED

Volunteer members of the South Dakota National Guard delivered about 1,000 winter clothing items statewide this week to help bring warmth to people in need this winter season. The donated clothing, which included coats, mittens, hats, scarves and blankets, were dispersed by Guard members to a variety of social service organizations in the communities in which they serve.



Soldiers and Airmen, as well as members of local communities, dropped off new and gently used items during the month of December at National Guard armories and Air Force bases located in 22 communities throughout the state.

This is the first time a winter clothing drive was coordinated by members of the SDNG.

One of the many organizations benefitting from the clothing drive was Working Against Violence, Inc., in Rapid City, who provides a safe haven for individuals in abusive relationships. WAVI serves nearly 2,100 people a year.

The all-volunteer effort to collect winter clothing items, while not an official function of the National Guard, is a welcome adjunct activity showcasing volunteers' commitment to serve some of South Dakota's most needy people.

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## SPARROW RECOGNIZED FOR HIS SUPPORT OF OPERATION RAV

Thomas Sparrow, Turner County Veterans Service Officer, was recognized this week during Gov. Daugaard's State of the State address.

Sparrow was credited for his commitment and dedication to the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs' Operation RAV campaign. Throughout the last nine months, Tom made over 11,000 calls to veterans and family members.

"Tom's dedication to South Dakota's veterans was evidenced in his strong passion and his even stronger sense of purpose," said SDDVA Secretary Larry Zimmerman. "He took great pride in what he did and who he did it for."

"We were successful in this endeavor because of the full complement of our partners, the county and tribal veterans service officers", said Zimmerman. "Many VSO's, like Sparrow, completed their respective list and then assisted neighboring counties."

"Operation RAV afforded South Dakota the opportunity to educate veterans and their families about benefits, programs and services, to listen to their concerns, to give them key contacts to work with on a local level, and to say 'thank you,'" said Zimmerman.

Sparrow not only contacted all of his veterans in Turner County, but he also assisted the following counties: Clay, Charles Mix, Custer, Lawrence, Lincoln, Minnehaha, Pennington, Yankton and Ziebach.

"My position as Turner County VSO will always be an honor and my office door is always open," said Sparrow. "Our heroes deserve our help and guidance in obtaining their benefits."

"South Dakota is an outstanding state that cares deeply about their veterans," said Sparrow.



## QUILTERS GUILD SUPPORTS SOUTH DAKOTA'S VETERANS

It's been said that a bed without a quilt is like a sky without stars. Fortunately, in our world at the State Veterans Home, we will never know what a sky without stars is like, thanks in part to our dear friends at the Minnekahta Quilters Guild who share and display their talents.

On Thursday evening, January 8, Marilyn Varick, current president of the Minnekahta Quilters Guild, presented Director of Operations Randy Meyers with a \$1,000 donation for use at the State Veterans Home.

The monies donated will be used to buy a new table saw for the residents to use in the hobby shop.



## 2015 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 2015 South Dakota Legislative Session opened this week with the Governor's State of the State address. During his address, Governor Dugaard commended our military forces and their families for their service to this great county, which was followed by a standing ovation! HOOAH!

The Governor then commended the Department of Veterans Affairs for completing their mission with Operation RAV.

The Department of the Military has introduced one bill this year, House Bill 1035. This legislation will revise certain provisions regarding military specialty plates.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has the following three bills: SB 33—an act to extend resident tuition eligibility to the spouses and children of active duty military personnel and of qualifying veterans, SB 34—an act to revise certain provisions concerning the administration of benefits provided to veterans, and SB 35—an act to repeal certain outdated and unnecessary statutes and rules related to the Department of Veterans Affairs. SB 34 and 35 are clean up bills as part of Governor Dugaard's red tape initiative. SB 33 is to ensure that South Dakota is in compliance with Section 702 of the Veterans Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014.

Both Departments will be reviewing all legislation that is introduced.



# Upcoming Events

## 2015

- Jan. 27—Aberdeen Stand Down—Bethany Lutheran Church—1620 Milwaukee Ave SE—1:00—6:00 pm  
Jan. 29—SDDVA/Veterans Council Legislative Breakfast  
Feb. 2—VFW Legislative Reception—AmericInn—Fort Pierre  
Feb. 3—American Legion Legislative Reception—Post 8 Legion Cabin—Pierre  
Feb. 6—Women Veterans Wellness Retreat—DAV—Sioux Falls  
Feb. 6-8—American Legion Mid Winter Conference—Watertown  
Feb 14—Sioux Falls VA Variety Show  
Feb. 21—Lee Greenwood Valentines for Veterans Concert—Sioux Falls Pavilion  
Apr. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am  
Jul. 6—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am  
Oct. 9—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer  
South Dakota Department of the Military <http://military.sd.gov>  
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov>  
Soldiers and Sailors Building  
425 E Capitol Avenue  
Pierre, SD 57501  
Phone: 605-773-8242  
E-mail address: [audry.ricketts@state.sd.us](mailto:audry.ricketts@state.sd.us)

