



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



PAYING IT FORWARD

In a 1784 letter authored by Benjamin Franklin to Benjamin Webb he states, "I do not pretend to give such a deed; I only lend it to you. When you meet with another honest man in similar distress, you must pay me by lending this sum to him; enjoining him to discharge the debt by a like operation, when he shall be able, and shall meet with another opportunity. I hope it may thus go thro' many hands, before it meets with a Knave that will stop its Progress. This is a trick of mine for doing a deal of good with a little money."

We are fortunate to live in a country where Americans really care about the men and women who defended our freedom with their life. You might say these Americans are "paying it forward."

Each month, I am overwhelmed by the generosity bestowed upon our veterans. Business leaders, service organizations, fraternal organizations, non-profits, schools, and citizens in every corner of this state renew their commitment to support our veterans and their families.

New programs are launched every month to benefit the lives of our veterans. These acts of kindness change the lives of our veterans and help them build a brighter future.

This past year, the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and our partners, the County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers, ventured out on a year-long campaign to Reach All Veterans. Our veterans deserve our support and Operation RAV afforded us the opportunity to express our gratitude to our veterans and increase awareness of the programs and services available to them. There are many resources available to our veterans and we need to continue to reach out to veterans and enlighten them and their families.

We will be wrapping up Phase I of Operation RAV within the coming months and will venture on to Phase II – Operation Ketchup. The goal of Operation Ketchup (OK) is to try to reach those veterans that we could not reach by phone. Please help us meet our goal with Operation Ketchup by encouraging your veteran to stop in at their local county or tribal veterans service office and update their contact information.

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DAVISON COUNTY NAMES NEW CVSO

Jessica Davidson has been named the new County Veterans Service Officer for Davison County and officially started on December 15. She replaces Steve McClure, who recently retired.

Jessica joined the U.S. Army in 1996, and had the MOS of 63H (track vehicle repairer). When Jessica joined she thought her job was going to be different. However, she didn't know how different until she got to AIT and the instructor held up a piston and said "This is a piston." She learned rather quickly that she was a mechanic. When she got to her duty station at Fort Riley, Kansas, she was assigned to a Maintenance Support Company. From there she was chosen to go the Direct Support Plus (DS Plus) program in turn she had the opportunity to learn all about the AGT 1500 Turbine Engine that is in the M1A1/A2 tank.

After completion of that program she became the Ammunition Manager, a Hazmat Handler and Assistant Driver's Training Instructor.

When her ETS date approached she opted to leave the service in 2002. She enrolled in a Community College in 2003 and graduated with an Associated Arts. She was then accepted and was about to attend College of St. Catherine, when she came to visit Dakota Wesleyan University. Realizing the benefits of attending school in South Dakota, she decided to enroll at DWU. Jessica graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in Biology, May 2011.

Jessica is a Shakespeare fan, loves to slalom ski and snow shoeing, loves music, likes dogs and is allergic to cats, loves to accessorize, and her favorite movies are comedies.

Jessica's hours are 8—5 Monday through Friday and her contact information is the same.

Welcome aboard Jessica.



NEW VOICE AT MJFSVH

There's a new voice at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. Ms. Stachia Walker serves as the senior secretary in the administration office. Senior Secretary here in the Admin (phone ext.: 116).

Stachia is originally from Mohave Valley, AZ and moved to Hot Springs Oct of 2009 when her husband, Richard, got transferred for Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad to work out of Edgemont. She has been married for 13 years and has two beautiful daughters Melanie (10) and Natalie (7).

Prior to moving to South Dakota Stachia was an insurance agent for Farmers Insurance for 9 ½ years, and after moving to Hot Springs she worked for Wells Fargo Bank for the last four years (serving as a teller, customer service and sales representative and service manager).

Jessica would tell you her world pretty much revolves around family and staying physically fit. Stachia is very excited to be a part of the South Dakota Veterans Home team!

Welcome to the team Stachia!!!!



CHRISTMAS MORNING AT MJFSVH

While many of us were busy opening presents, sipping on hot cocoa or eating a homemade sticky roll, elves at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home were busy ensuring that our veterans would have a Christmas to remember.

Candace Shelton (RN, Unit Supervisor in the Special Care Unit) and her daughter came in that morning to deliver Christmas gifts to the residents.

The family pet pig visited the Home that day and helped spread some holiday cheer!!!!!!



Elves: Nadya Powers (RN), Lynn Two Bear (MA), and Richelle Blunting (CNA).



90TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 90th Session of the South Dakota Legislature will convene at approximately 1:00 pm on Tuesday, January 13, 2015, with Governor Daugaard's State of the State Address. This year's session is scheduled for 39 legislative days, with the main run concluding March 13. March 30 is reserved for considering gubernatorial vetoes.

Legislative actions can be viewed at:

http://legis.sd.gov/Legislative_Session/Default.aspx?Session=Ninetieth&cookieC heck=true

Legislative bills can be tracked or monitored at:

http://legis.sd.gov/Legislative_Session/Bills/

Live broadcasts of legislative actions and committee meetings are provided by South Dakota Public Broadcasting at: http://legis.sd.gov/Legislative_Session/Media/rss.aspx

DOL NAMES NEW JVSG PROGRAM COORDINATOR

James Perry has been named the new Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) Program Coordinator for the South Dakota Department of Labor.

James is located in the Rapid City local office and will remain based in that location.

James is medically retired from the USAF with the rank of Major. He was a B-1 pilot involved in flight training as well as combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. James has earned The Air Medal, The Meritorious Unit Award with one oak leaf cluster, The National Defense Service Medal with one service star, The Afghanistan Campaign Medal with two service stars, The Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, and The Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

In addition to his military service, James has a MS degree in Criminal Justice from Charleston Southern University, Charleston, SC.



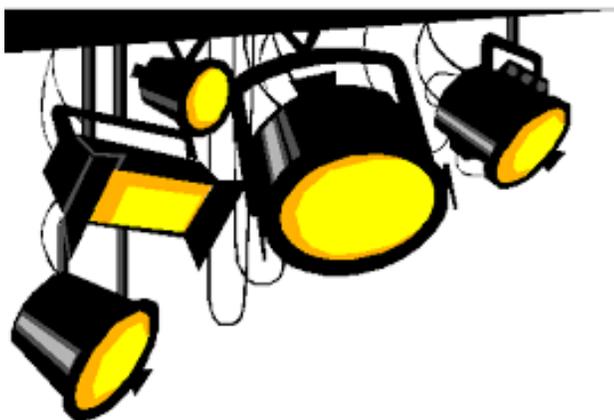
James will be travelling to all Local Offices in the state in the coming weeks and months to meet with all JVSG staff, VETS, and other veteran-related agencies and entities.



VA VARIETY SHOW

The Sioux Falls VA Variety Show will be held February 14.

Veterans, volunteers, and VA staff are invited to be a part of the big show, sharing their talents in music, drama, comedy, skits, puppetry, dance, etc.



If being on stage isn't your cup of tea, there are many behind-the-scenes jobs, too, such as ushering, serving refreshments, escorting patients, etc.

If you would like more information or are ready to commit, please call Diane Larsen at 605-336-3230 (Ext. 6248 or 6418).

Deadline for auditions for the show is Friday, January 23rd.

Upcoming Events

2015

- Jan. 13—Governor's State of the State Address—Pierre—1:00 pm
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

