



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



## HUFFMON KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT DAR'S VIETNAM VETERANS CEREMONY

It's reported that over 28,000 South Dakotans served in the Vietnam War. Last week the Harney Peak Daughters of the American Revolution honored Vietnam Veterans with an exhibit in the 1881 Custer Courthouse Museum. This year marks fifty years since the start of the Vietnam War and the DAR partnered with local veterans service organizations to host a dedication ceremony.

SDDVA's Will Huffmon, field officer for western South Dakota, was one of the keynote speakers. Huffmon thanked all Vietnam Veterans for their service. In his remarks he said, "We need to remind ourselves of the countless Vietnam Veterans who came back to a hostile home front. No other group of American heroes, ever had to come back to such anger, disregard, and disrespect. Only them." Huffmon noted that, as a veteran of the most recent war era, he is selfishly thankful that America learned a lesson from the Vietnam War. While you can disagree with a conflict or the political leaders decisions, you can never respect America's men and women who don the uniform.

Huffmon concluded his remarks by stating, "thanks to this lesson that the country learned from these great Vietnam War heroes, my generation of veterans come back to a friendly and welcoming America."

The exhibit will remain in the museum for another two months and then it will travel to various other locations.

The Harney Peak Daughters of the American Revolution will host two more events on June fourteenth to honor South Dakota Vietnam Veterans still in the area.



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## SDDVA HOSTS MINI CONFERENCES

This week the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs hosted their annual spring Mini Conferences. Training conferences were held in Rapid City, Pierre, and Brookings for all County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers.

Representatives from the South Dakota Department of Human Services Rehabilitation Distribution program opened each of the sessions with information on their Telecommunications Equip Distribution program.

SDDVA's Will Huffmon, Jerry Lemme, Don Thomson and Caitlyn Zylstra made presentations on pension eligibility and fully developed claims, completion of pension forms, and working with VBMS, MAPD, SHARE, Virtual VA, VetraSpec and D2D. SDDVA staff also conducted hands-on pension exercises and assisted the CTVSOs as they worked through the various scenarios.

SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman provided brief remarks at each location and thanked the CTVSOs for the work they are doing to assist our veterans and their families.

The next training program for the CTVSOs will be the annual SDDVA Benefit School August 22-25 in Pierre.



Jerry Lemme

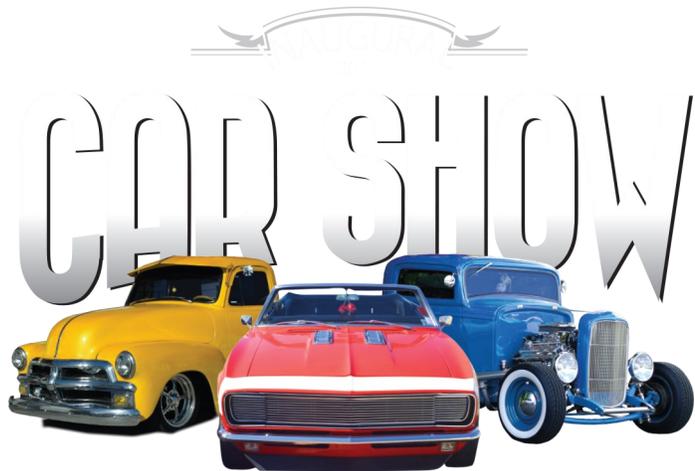


## LATI ANNUAL CAR SHOW BENEFIT OBHC

Lake Area Technical Institute recently held their 11<sup>th</sup> annual Car Show in Watertown. They had 94 vehicles, 54 student volunteers, eight staff members, and an estimated 1,000 attendees.

Wristband sales netted \$3,655. This along with the \$1,012 raised at their Car Care Event held in October, was presented as a donation to Operation Black Hills Cabin.

LATI Students have decided that they are going to donate next year's donations to Operations Black Hills Cabin again.



## VA TO HOST TOWN HALL AND CEREMONY TO HONOR VIETNAM VETERANS

VA Black Hills Health Care System, the Dakotas VA Regional Office, and the Black Hills National Cemetery will host a Vietnam War 50th Anniversary Commemoration Ceremony to thank and honor Vietnam-Era Veterans on May 23, 2016, at 5:00 p.m. at the VFW Post 1273, 420 Main Street in Rapid City. "This is a well-deserved but long overdue welcome home to recognize the service and sacrifice of Vietnam Veterans", said Sandra Horsman, Director, VA Black Hills Health Care System. As part of the event, Vietnam Veterans will be presented with a lapel pin.

Prior to the ceremony a Benefits Claims Clinic will take place from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. During this Claims Clinic, VA representatives will be available to discuss both claims for compensation benefits and enrollment and eligibility in health care. The VA will have secure electronic access to benefit records and can answer veterans questions on their compensation claim.

Following the ceremony at 5:30 p.m., veterans and family members are invited to participate in a Veterans Town Hall. The meeting is intended to provide an open forum for VA officials to share updates and hear directly from beneficiaries about VA services.



## VABHHCS EXTENDS PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

The VA Black Hills Health Care System (VABHHCS) has announced an extension of the public comment period through June 20, 2016, for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) regarding the proposed reconfiguration of VA Black Hills Health Care System. The comment period was set to expire on May 5, 2016.

Another extension is required to provide for conclusion of the historic consultation process which is being undertaken as part of the EIS process in accordance with the National Historic Properties Act (NHPA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The public may continue to submit written comments online at [www.blackhillseis.com](http://www.blackhillseis.com), by email to [vablackhillsfuture@va.gov](mailto:vablackhillsfuture@va.gov), or by regular mail to Staff Assistant to the Director, VA BHHCS, 113 Comanche Road, Fort Meade, SD 57741.



## EVEREADY ENERGIZER BUNNY RETURNS IN FULL FORCE—LOOK OUT SOUTH DAKOTA

Although out for medical leave for a short period, SDDVA Secretary Zimmerman is back at work and in full force. Last Friday he attended the ROTC Award Ceremony at Mount Rushmore and presented scholarships on behalf of the Vietnam Veterans of America.

Saturday he was the keynote speaker at the American Legion Post 303 Open House in Hermosa.



This week he is traveling the state participating in SDDVA's Mini Conferences in Rapid City, Pierre, and Brookings.

It's great to have him back on the job advocating for South Dakota's veterans!!!!!! Hooah!



# Upcoming Events

- May 13—Improving Combat Veteran Care Conference—University Center—Sioux Falls—8:00 am (CT)  
 May 14—South Dakota Vietnam Veterans of America Meeting/Election—Post 8 American Legion—Pierre  
 (election at 11:00 am (CT) and meeting at 1:00 pm (CT))  
 May 14—2nd Annual PVA Poker Run and Concert—Sanford Pentagon—Sioux Falls  
 May 14—Armed Forces Day—Brookings VFW Post (520 Main Avenue) 10:00 am—4:00 pm (CT)  
 May 17—WWII Veterans Luncheon—TREA (1981 Centre Street—Rapid City) 11:00 am (MT)  
 May 18-19—SDCMF Symposium—Black Hills State University Center—Rapid City  
 May 23—Town Hall and Ceremony to Honor Vietnam Veterans—Rapid City VFW (420 Main St) 4:00 pm (MT)  
 May 28—Project 22 Showings—Mac Theater on Main Street—Mobridge (Showings at 4:00 pm and 7:30 pm)  
 Jun. 9-12—VFW State Convention—The Lodge at Deadwood  
 Jun. 14—Vietnam War Veterans Recognition—Custer Jr/Sr. High School (1645 Wildcat Lane) - 9:30 am (MT)  
 Jun. 14—Vietnam War Veterans Recognition—Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home (2500 Minnekahta  
 Avenue) - Hot Springs - 1:30 pm (MT)  
 Jun. 16-19—American Legion State Convention—Ramkota—Watertown  
 Jun. 29—Black Hills Veterans Job Fair—Central States Fair Grounds (915 Centre Street) - 11:00 am (MT)  
 Jul. 1—Buffalo Chip Annual Flag Raising Ceremony—West Gate Entrance off Ft. Meade Way—6:00 pm (MT)  
 Jul. 11—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)  
 Jul. 23-24—Sioux Falls Air Show  
 Aug. 22-25—SDDVA Annual Benefits School—Pierre Ramkota  
 Oct. 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—9:00 am (MT)



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