On Saturday, August 20, South Dakota dedicated the Little Minnesota River Bridge on SD HWY 106 in honor of U.S. Army Private August E. Otto, Jr.

Otto was drafted into the Army in 1942 and sent overseas to the North American area of the Attu Island (Aleutian Islands of Alaska). Otto was killed in action at Attu Island on May 18, 1943.

Naming this South Dakota bridge in honor of PVT Otto gives us an opportunity of remembrance, reflection, respect, and gratitude. Dedicating this bridge is a small token to honor August, and to reinforce that he will not be forgotten.

The men and women whose names do, or will appear, on South Dakota bridges to honor them were American soldiers, sailors, airmen, marines, and coast guardsmen who served during troubled times. Their sacrifices need to be remembered.
VETERANS ACTIVITIES AT THE SOUTH DAKOTA STATE FAIR

In support of our veterans, military personnel, and their families, the South Dakota State Fair offers numerous events throughout the week honoring our heroes.

The Fair will host a “Salute to Veterans” program on the Northwestern Energy Freedom Stage at 10:30 am on Thursday, September 1. Governor Kristi Noem and Midwest Honor Flight President and CEO Aaron Van Beek will be the keynote speakers. All veterans and military personnel will receive free gate admission.

On Friday, September 2, fairgoers are encouraged to wear red in support of our deployed troops. Everyone in red is encouraged to meet at the Northwestern Energy Freedom Stage at 1:45 pm to take a group photo that will be sent to the troops.

Throughout the week, fairgoers are encouraged to stop in at the Prostrollo Motors Building (just west of Flag Avenue and 2nd Street) and sign “thank you” signs for the troops. After the Fair, the signs will be sent to the 1742nd Transportation Company and the 235th Military Police Company, along with the photos.

Staff from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be at the fair all week. Look for us in the Expo Building (Booth #5A). The SDDVA team will be manning the booth from 9:00 am to 8:00 pm Thursday through Sunday and from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on Monday. Our staff will be able to update veterans on state and federal benefits, programs, and services.

“We encourage all veterans to stop by the booth and meet our crew of experts,” said Greg Whitlock, secretary of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. “Whether in peace or at war, the important role of our veterans cannot be denied. They are men and women from all walks of life that have one thing in common – a love for this great country. No matter where or when veterans have served, they’ve always served with distinction and their service to this country is a bridge that was built on courage, dedication, and patriotism.”

Visit https://www.sdstatefair.com/ for more information on the State Fair.
MESSAGE FROM SDDVA
SECRETARY WHITLOCK—SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED

One of my favorite Abraham Lincoln quotes is “Honor to the soldier, and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country’s cause. Honor, also, to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field and serves, as he best can, the same cause.”

Our veterans have shouldered the burden of our defense. They have displayed extraordinary strength and resilience in the face of adversity to protect the freedoms we, as Americans, enjoy every day.

When our men and women return home after their tour of duty, we have the opportunity to show our gratitude by serving them. They must know that there are resources to help them. Veterans service officers provide a service, at no cost, to assist veterans in applying for benefits.

There has been a lot in the news lately about the Camp Lejeune lawsuit. We encourage all veterans to work with an accredited service officer when determining how to proceed with claims based upon exposure to hazards at Camp Lejeune. A final determination has not been made regarding lawsuits related to the Camp Lejeune Water Act and how this will impact veterans’ abilities to receive care at the VA and receive payments for disabilities related to these toxic exposures.

Additionally, the Honoring our Pact Act of 2022 expands VA compensation and healthcare benefits to veterans exposed to Agent Orange, burn pits, and other toxic exposures.

I’m proud of the resources that the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs and our partners; the county and tribal veterans service officers, provide at no cost.

This team of experts have worn the boots, walked the trenches, conducted maneuvers, commanded troops, sustained missions, and protected our freedoms. They are veterans that have borne the battle and are committed to ensure that our heroes receive the highest quality of services possible. Again, there is no charge for the services they provide our veterans in obtaining their benefits.

To reach our SDDVA team, please call 605.333.6869. To locate a county or tribal veterans service officer, please visit: https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/veteransserviceofficers/locatevso.aspx.

The SDDVA and our partners put our veterans first, serving those who have given so much to this nation. We consider it an honor and a privilege and are committed to assisting our veterans with their questions on the Pact Act and Camp Lejeune.
EVERYBODY'S ELVIS

SPECIAL CONCERT/50's DANCE NIGHT

SATURDAY OCT. 8 DOOR 6:30PM-SHOWTIME 7PM
Sanford Event Barn: 2510 E. 54th St. North (SF)

Tickets $20 advance/$25 at door/For More Information:
www.midwesthonorflight.org/elvis

PROCEEDS BENEFITING:

CureKids Cancer  MIDWEST HONOR FLIGHT  Children's Miracle Network Hospitals

SPONSORED BY:

D O G D A Y S  Hotel & Day Camp  LEE'S TAILORING & ALTERATION  Active Generations  CorTrust Mortgage  SANFORD Children's
Heading to the South Dakota State Fair?

VISIT OUR BOOTH - #5A
EXPO BUILDING

Staff from the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs will be at the South Dakota State Fair all week. Look for us in the Expo Building (Booth# 5A). This team will be able to update veterans on state and federal benefits, programs, and services.

RAPID CITY VETERAN STAND DOWN

When: Thursday, Sept 15th, 2022,
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. MT
Where: Holiday Inn Convention Center,
505 N 5th Street, Rapid City, SD 57701

SERVICES OFFERED

Lunch (by Goodwill)
Clothing
VA Benefits
Housing Referrals
Employment Services
Legal Assistance
Readjustment Counseling
Much More!

* Please bring a copy of your DD214, dependent information, and identification to the event. Documentation is needed so we can fully serve you and your needs.

For questions contact VA Black Hills:
Christel Kitzelman at: 605-490-0029
REMEMBER EVERYONE DEPLOYED
WEAR RED!

On Friday, September 2, SD State Fairgoers are encouraged to wear red in support of our troops deployed. At 1:45 pm (CT) everyone wearing red is asked to meet at the Northwestern Energy Freedom Stage to take a group photo that will be sent to the troops.

PRODUCTION
Thanking our Troops

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<td>Northwestern Energy Freedom Stage</td>
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DIRECTOR
South Dakota State Fair

CAMERA

DATE
Friday, September 2, at 1:45 pm (CT)

GOING TO THE SD STATE FAIR?
REMEMBER TO STOP IN AND THANK OUR TROOPS

Throughout the week fairgoers are encouraged to stop in at the Prostrollo Motors Building (just west of Flag Avenue and 2nd Street) and sign a “thank you” sign for the troops. After the Fair, the signs will be sent to our deployed troops (1742nd Transportation Company and the 235th Military Police Company) along with the photos.
The Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home is blessed to have one of the best activity directors. Laura Inman, MJFSVH activity director, dedicates her time to ensuring that our residents at the State Veterans Home are kept busy and entertained.

This past week she brought her Haflinger Team (Thelma and Louise) to work. The visit gave the residents the opportunity to pet and talk to them.

Even residents that were unable to go outside shared in this great activity.

Thanks Laura, for finding those special ways to brighten the days for our residents.
Walking Group for Caregivers!

If you are a Caregiver of a Veteran, come walk with us!
Groups will take place from
2:00-3:00 p.m. on the following dates:

August 30, 2022
September 13, 2022
September 27, 2022
October 11, 2022
October 25, 2022

Registration is required
For location and to register, call:
Nic Brokenleg or Anna Rasmussen
(605) 336-3230 ext. 5018 or ext. 7826
Book Club for Caregivers

Please join the Caregiver Support Program at the Sioux Falls VA for a virtual book club. Meetings will be virtual on:

- September 30th 12:00 - 1:00 p.m.
- Discussion on pages 1-97
- October 21st 12:00 -1:00 p.m.
- Discussion on pages 98-196

Feel free to enjoy your lunch during our discussion. We will be reading “The Five People You Meet in Heaven” by Mitch Albom.

Please call Anna Rasmussen 605-336-3230 ext. 7826 to register for the book club.

If you are needing assistance accessing the book please let us know, by September 2, 2022 and we can make arrangements. You are also welcome to utilize the audio book to participate.
"Salute To Veterans"
Thursday, September 1, 2022- 10:30 AM
NorthWestern Energy Freedom Stage

Master of Ceremonies ~ Mike Vehle
Posting of Colors
Pledge of Allegiance
National Anthem ~ Miss SD Hunter Widvey
Opening Prayer ~ Julian Burgess
Wagon Wheel Cowboy Church
Ragged Old Flag - Sherwin Linton
Speaker:
Aaron Van Beek, Board President and Midwest Honor Flight - Flight Director
Special Music ~ Miss SD Hunter Widvey
Special Guest ~ Governor Kristi Noem
Chet Sorenson Veteran of the Year Award
God Bless America ~ Everyone
Retiring of the Colors

God Bless America,
Land that I love,
Stand beside her, and guide her
Thru the night with a light from above.
From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans, white with foam
God bless America, My home sweet home.
Implementation Planning for 988 - Call Center Hub

Informed by the work of the Behavioral Health Crisis Response Stakeholder Coalition

Key Factors to Consider from the Planning Coalition

- Workforce availability and retention is a top concern for sustainable operations.
  Staffing up for specialized services will present challenges. To realistically implement the plan, workforce development and supporting wages to recruit and retain a specialized workforce is critical.

- Building capacity for local response and receiving facilities are equally important.
  While the intent of the 988 implementation plan focuses on call center hub development, using terminology from the Crisis Now model, the other two pillars - “someone to respond” and “somewhere to go” are equally critical in standing up a responsive crisis system in South Dakota.

- Local providers are central to successful messaging and promotion of 988.
  Equipping agencies with materials and information to support public education at the local level will be critical.
  Monitoring of actual call volume compared to projections will be needed.
  Based on long-term projections, it remains to be seen what long-term funding will be necessary to support call center capacity.

What is 988?
A new three-digit number for mental health crisis launching nationally on July 16, 2022. Grant funding was made available to all states through Vibrant Emotional Health to ensure the successful transition from the current 10-digit crisis number to the new three-digit number – 988. When implemented, 988 will be routed to the Lifeline’s current 1-800 number, managed by the Helpline Center.

Who contributed to the 988 implementation plan?
The Division of Behavioral Health invited stakeholders representative of the full continuum of behavioral health crisis response or prevention services available in South Dakota. Membership included state staff, people with lived experience, Lifeline Crisis Center (Helpline Center) staff, state suicide prevention coordinators, mobile crisis service providers, crisis respite and stabilization service providers, law enforcement representatives, 911 leaders, peer support service providers, mental health and suicide prevention advocacy groups, tribal representatives, and other geographic or disparate population representatives.

What are the benefits of 988 for South Dakotans?
- Immediate access to mental health professionals
  On average, 80% of calls received by trained crisis counselors in a 988 setting can be de-escalated on the phone, reducing the need to dispatch law enforcement in situations that do not have safety concerns. In the event situations necessitate a response, resources can be quickly dispatched.
- One, easy to remember number to call
  Increased access to community-based resources through a central call center for both referring law enforcement and individuals seeking help for themselves or loved ones.

Funding
An independent consultant, Guidehouse, was contracted to review funding need and potential funding solutions for 988 call center operations. Implementation planning (March 2021-February 2022) funding was provided through grant by Vibrant. Ramp up and first year funding needs (March 2022-June 2023) will be addressed using currently available one-time crisis funds. Future funding options are being reviewed based on findings from the report provided by Guidehouse.

For more information: https://dss.sd.gov/behavioralhealth/grantinfo.aspx
UPCOMING EVENTS

Aug 27—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 11 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—9:30 pm (CT)
Sep 1—Veterans Day at the South Dakota State Fair—Huron
Sep 2—RED Day at the State Fair—Group Photo at the Freedom Stage in Huron at 1:45 pm (CT)
Sep 1—5—South Dakota State Fair—Huron
Sep 3—727th/DAV Poker Run—Swiftel Center (824 32nd Avenue)—Brookings—10:00 am (CT)
Sep 5—Labor Day
Sep 9—11—PVA Annual Trapshoot—Crooks Gun Club
Sep 10—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 12 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—9:30 pm (CT)
Sep 10—Heroes Helping with Horsepower Military Appreciation Event—W. Main Street—Ethan—Festivities begin at 8:00 am (CT)
Sep 12—PVA Doug Brown Memorial Hunt—Howard
Sep 14—17—Black Hills Veterans March
Sep 15—Veterans Stand Down—Holiday Inn Convention Center (505 N. 5th Street)—Rapid City—10:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
Sep 17—CPL Martin Fluegel Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—McCook Central High School—Salem—1:00 pm (CT)
Sep 23—Veterans Stand Down—SD Military Heritage Alliance (1600 W. Russell)—Sioux Falls—9:00 am (CT)
Sep 28—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion—Rapid City—9:00 am—noon (MT)
UPCOMING EVENTS

Oct 1—PVT Frederic Schroeder Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Madison City Armory—1:00 pm (CT)
Oct 1—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 13 Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center Arena—9:30 pm (CT)
Oct 3—BHNC Unaccompanied Veterans Memorial Service—(20901 Pleasant Valley Dr)—Sturgis—9:00 am (MT)
Oct 8—Midwest Honor Flight Elvis Concert Fundraiser—Sanford Event Barn (2510 E. 54th Street N)—Sioux Falls—7:00 pm (CT)
Oct 10—Native American Day
Oct 21—PVA Dueling Pianos Fundraiser—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell Street)—Sioux Falls—7:00 pm (CT)
Nov 5—We’ve Got Your Six Veterans Appreciation Fair—Sturgis Community Center—(1401 Lazelle Street)—Sturgis—11:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
Nov 11—Veterans Day
Nov 11—Capt Tommy Callies Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Howard High School—9:30 am (CT)
Nov 11—S2 Wayne Bridge Fallen Hero Bridge Dedication—Wagner High School—2:00 pm (CT)
Nov 16—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting—Pierre
Nov 24—Thanksgiving Day
Dec 6—Governor’s Budget Address
Dec 17—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—11:00 am (CT)
Dec 25—Christmas

2023 Events

Jan 10—Governor’s State of the State Address
Jan 11—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting
Feb 10—12—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Huron
Mar 22—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting
May 17—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting
Jun 8—11—American Legion State Conference—Oacoma
Jul 19—South Dakota Veterans Council Meeting

2024 Events

Feb 16—18—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Deadwood
Jun 20—23—American Legion State Conference—Pierre

2025 Events

Feb 14—16—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Oacoma
Jun 19—22—American Legion State Conference—Huron

Audry Ricketts, Public Information Officer
South Dakota Department of the Military https://military.sd.gov/
South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs https://vetaffairs.sd.gov
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