



# NEWSLETTER

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



## SUICIDE PREVENTION CONFERENCE

Registration for the 3rd Annual South Dakota Suicide Prevention Conference is now open! This no-cost conference is open to anyone interested in learning more about additional tools and resources that are available in South Dakota.

Key speakers include: Kevin Briggs, retired law enforcement and the “Guardian of the Golden Gate Bridge”, Tom Cruz, retired Army First Sergeant and suicide attempt survivor along with his wife Heather Cruz, and Dr. Rosie Bauder, a Clinical Assistant Professor at Ohio State University and Licensed Professional Counselor.

There will also be speakers in the areas of youth, suicide prevention, tribal communities, and compassion fatigue.

Registration will close on July 22nd or until capacity is reached. [Click here](#) to register now!

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# WE NEED TO TALK

## 2024 Suicide Prevention Conference



 THURS, AUGUST 1ST-  
FRI, AUGUST 2ND

 SIOUX FALLS  
CONVENTION CENTER

# VA ANNOUNCES EXPANSION OF CANCER PROGRAM

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs has announced an expansion of its Close to Me cancer care program. This expansion will bring new cancer diagnosis, treatment, and surveillance services to an additional 9,000 veterans and 30 locations by the end of October 2025. Under this program, VA clinicians travel to provide veterans with the full continuum of cancer care at nearby community-based outpatient clinics, often in rural locations. This reduces the need for veterans to travel to medical centers for cancer care, affording veterans and their caregivers more time to go about their daily lives and focus on healing. It also allows more veterans to utilize VA care.

Close to Me cancer care has had zero reported medical emergencies during treatment to date, has high patient satisfaction among veterans, and has a 99% treatment adherence rate. Since the inception of the program in 2021, nearly 500 veterans have had cancer treatments closer to home in over 20 community-based outpatient clinic loca-



tions, reducing travel for Veterans and their caregivers by more than 200,000 miles.

“We want veterans to have easy access to the care they need, where they need it,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “This expansion will provide veterans with a VA care option that delivers truly personalized, high-quality, integrated cancer care closer to where they live.”

To date, the service has resulted in savings of more than \$1.9 million in medication costs by leveraging the VA’s statutory access to reduced drug costs compared with costs if these veterans had been referred to the community.

Last September, the VA and the National Cancer Institute announced a historic data-sharing collaboration to better understand and treat cancer among veterans. The VA has also prioritized claims processing for veterans with cancer — delivering nearly \$516 million in PACT Act benefits to veterans with cancer between August 10, 2022, and March 3, 2024. And the VA has screened more than five million veterans for toxic exposures under the PACT Act — a critical step to detecting, understanding, and treating potentially life-threatening health conditions like cancer.

The VA encourages veterans to reach out to their VA provider about how the VA can support them wherever they may be in their cancer care journey. Learn more about VA cancer care by visiting [cancer.va.gov](https://cancer.va.gov).

## VSO UPDATE

Dewey County has selected Marshall Totton as their new county veterans service officer.

His office hours will be from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm on the first and third Tuesdays and Thursdays of the month.

He can be reached at 605-865-3539 or emailed at: [vso@deweycounty.biz](mailto:vso@deweycounty.biz).

Please join SDDVA in welcoming Marshall to the veteran network.



## SDDVA PARTICIPATES IN DAV STATE CONVENTION

This past weekend, SDDVA Secretary Greg Whitlock and Field Service Officer Will Huffmon participated in the annual Disabled American Veterans state convention in Deadwood.

Whitlock served as a panelist in the Veterans Town Hall panel and briefed chapter and auxiliary members during the general session. Whitlock updated attendees on the State Veterans Home, the State Veterans Cemetery, legislative session, and veteran's benefits.

Huffmon hosted an outreach benefits table and spoke to DAV members about their benefits.



# CARNIVAL TIME!

When the weatherman says rain and cool, our activities director at the State Veterans Home says "carnival time!" Special shout out to Laura and her team, the MJFSVH staff, Custer VFW Post and Auxiliary, and the Hot Springs Elks Lodge for all their assistance. Still not sure who had more fun - the staff or the residents!!!!



# BINGO

A big thank you to the Kennebec/Reliance American Legion Post 179 for hosting a “Bingo” marathon for the residents at the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home this past weekend.

The residents loved the game time, the prizes, the extra gifts, and the treats.

Bingo is not just a game; it's an opportunity to connect with others and create memories.

We truly appreciate all the organizations and volunteers that provide these great opportunities for our residents!



# Sales or Property Tax Refund for Senior Citizens & Citizens with Disabilities

Deadline to  
Apply:  
July 1st



**Apply here:**

<https://sddor.seamlessdocs.com/f/2050>

For questions about eligibility requirements and income limitations, or to get a paper copy of the application, please call: 1 (800) 829-9188 (Ext. 1) or visit our website at:

<https://dor.sd.gov/individuals/taxes/property-tax/relief-programs/>



# UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 6-18—Fareway Round Up Campaign at participating stores
- May 7—Corson County What's Brewing—Pavilion—(Main and First Ave)—McIntosh—10:00 am (MT)
- May 7—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 18—Welcome Home Ceremony—Sioux Falls Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (CT)
- May 9—Gregory County What's Brewing—American Legion Post 6—(223 Main Street)—Gregory—5:00 pm (CT)
- May 13—Operation Chow Line—Rosalle's Restaurant—(9 8th Avenue E)—Sisseton—2:00—7:00 pm (CT)
- May 16—Black Hills National Cemetery Carry the Load Program—Sturgis—3:00 pm (MT)
- May 21—Yankton County What's Brewing—VFW Post 791—(209 Cedar St)—Yankton—10:00 am (CT)
- May 21—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 19—Welcome Home Ceremony—Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (CT)
- May 27—Sioux Area Veterans Council Memorial Day—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls—10:00 am (CT)
- May 27—SDDVA Memorial Day Program—SD Veterans Cemetery—12:00 noon (CT)
- Jun 1—Rich Schild Memorial Poker Run—Keg—Tabor—1:00 pm (CT)
- Jun 5—Midwest Honor Flight Mission 20—Welcome Home Ceremony—Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls—9:30 pm (CT)
- Jun 7—8—VFW State Conference—Holiday Inn—Spearfish
- Jun 14—Midwest Honor Flight Day of Sweetness—Chick-fil-A—(4005 W. 41st St)—Sioux Falls—7:00 am — 10:00 pm (CT)
- Jun 20—23—American Legion State Conference—Pierre
- Jun 30—Midwest Honor Flight Honor Ride—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls—Registration—1:00 pm/Ride Begins at 2:30 pm (CT)
- Jul 15—6th Annual Tee it up for the Troops Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—Arrowhead Country Club—(3675 Sheridan Lake Road)—Rapid City—7:15 am (MT)
- Jul 17—SD Veterans Council Meeting—VFW Post 17—(802 S. Main St)—Aberdeen
- Aug 1—2—South Dakota Suicide Prevention Conference—Convention Center—(1201 N. West Ave)—Sioux Falls
- Aug 21—SD Veterans Council Meeting—VFW Post 791—(209 S. Cedar)—Yankton
- Aug 26—Midwest Honor Flight Fundraiser—The Barrel House—(4701 E. 54th St)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—8:00 pm (CT)
- Aug 28—Sep 2—SD State Fair—Huron
- Aug 29—Veterans Day at the SD State Fair—Northwest Energy Freedom Stage—Huron
- Sep 3—5—SDDVA Annual CTVSO Benefit School—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls
- Sep 18—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Rapid City
- Oct 12—Midwest Honor Flight Third Annual Elvis Night—SD Military Heritage Alliance—(1600 W. Russell St)—Sioux Falls
- Oct 16—SD Veterans Council Meeting—American Legion Post—(1229 Western Ave)—Brookings

(Continued)

# UPCOMING EVENTS

- Nov 9—Fifth Annual Northern Hills Veterans Appreciation Fair We've Got Your Six—Sturgis Community Center—  
(1401 Lazelle Street)—Sturgis—11:00 am—2:00 pm (MT)
- Nov 9—Third Annual Day County Veterans Banquet—Webster Armory—5:00 pm (CT)
- Nov 18—Wreaths Across America Fundraiser—The Barrel House—(4701 E. 54th St)—Sioux Falls—11:00 am—8:00  
pm (CT)
- Nov 20—SD Veterans Council Meeting—DAV—(1519 W. 51st St)—Sioux Falls
- Nov 20—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Sioux Falls
- Nov 21—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Watertown
- Nov 22—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Rapid City
- Nov 23—SD Veterans Council Legislative Round Table—Pierre
- Dec 3—Governor's Budget Address—1:00 pm
- Dec 14—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—  
11:00 am (CT)

## 2025 Events

- Jan 14—Governor's State of the State Address—1:00 pm
- Jan 14—Legislative Session starts
- Jan 15—SD Veterans Council Meeting—Pierre
- Feb 14—16—American Legion Mid-Winter Conference—Oacoma
- Jun 12—15—VFW State Convention—Ramkota—Pierre
- Jun 19—22—American Legion State Conference—Huron
- Dec 13—Wreaths Across America Wreath Laying Ceremony at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery—Sioux Falls—  
11:00 am (CT)

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