

# **SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

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**2014 ANNUAL REPORT**

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## MESSAGE FROM SECRETARY ZIMMERMAN

January 25, 2015

TO: The Governor of the State of South Dakota, the Lieutenant Governor, Members of the Cabinet, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

I am pleased to submit the 2014 edition of my second annual report for the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs. This report highlights the outstanding accomplishments of our superb team, dedicated professionals and the unmatched support we receive from our partners. On a daily basis, our team labors tirelessly to ensure that the State of South Dakota preserves our reputation as “a veteran friendly state.”

The primary mission of the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs is to advocate with purpose and passion for South Dakota’s veterans and link them to superior services, benefits, and support. Our team is at the forefront of the most demanding challenges confronting our state’s veterans, whether they are veterans from the World War II generation, Korean War, Vietnam War, Cold War, or veterans who most recently served in support of Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, or Operation New Dawn.

Over the past four years, U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) expenditures have accounted for over \$400 million annually to South Dakota’s economy. Although those numbers are impressive, there are many eligible veterans in South Dakota who are not taking advantage of the many federal and state benefits and services available to them as a result of their military service. Our goal for 2014 was to close this gap.

As is the case with all of our state agencies, our people truly make a difference. For the team at the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA), it truly is a privilege and an honor to serve our veterans and their family members.

Larry Zimmerman, Secretary





*“With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation’s wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.”*

*(Abraham Lincoln)*

## VISION

Voices for Veterans

## MISSION

To advocate for and provide the pathway for all veterans and their families to receive the benefits due to them.

## OVERVIEW

The challenges facing South Dakota veterans as they return home from their service to our nation remain unchanged from previous years. Severely wounded personnel, including those suffering Traumatic Brain Injury and Post Traumatic Stress, will strain the VA Health and Benefits systems for decades to come. This is of great concern in South Dakota as there are high numbers of National Guard, Reserves, and active duty personnel participating in multiple deployments. At a time when the United States Department of Defense and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs may have difficulty providing timely services to many veterans in need, SDDVA will augment and enhance needed support to obtain VA services and benefits to those who have served.

SDDVA continues to collaborate with individuals, organizations, commissions, and national and state agencies to develop, promote and support the interests of South Dakota’s veterans.



*Leadership is getting the right people to do the right thing for the right reason in the right way at the right time with the right use of resources (Clark Crouch).*

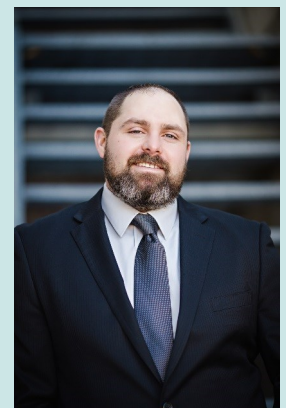
## SECRETARY

Larry Zimmerman  
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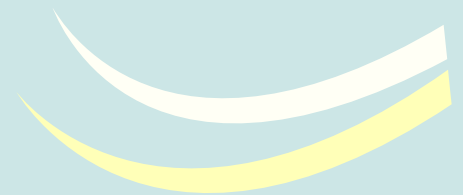
## DEPUTY SECRETARY

Aaron Pollard  
Claims Office—c/o VA Regional Office  
PO Box 5046  
Sioux Falls, SD 57117-5046  
Phone: 605-333-6869  
Cell Phone: 605-360-4173  
Fax: 605-333-5386  
Email: [aaron.pollard@state.sd.us](mailto:aaron.pollard@state.sd.us)



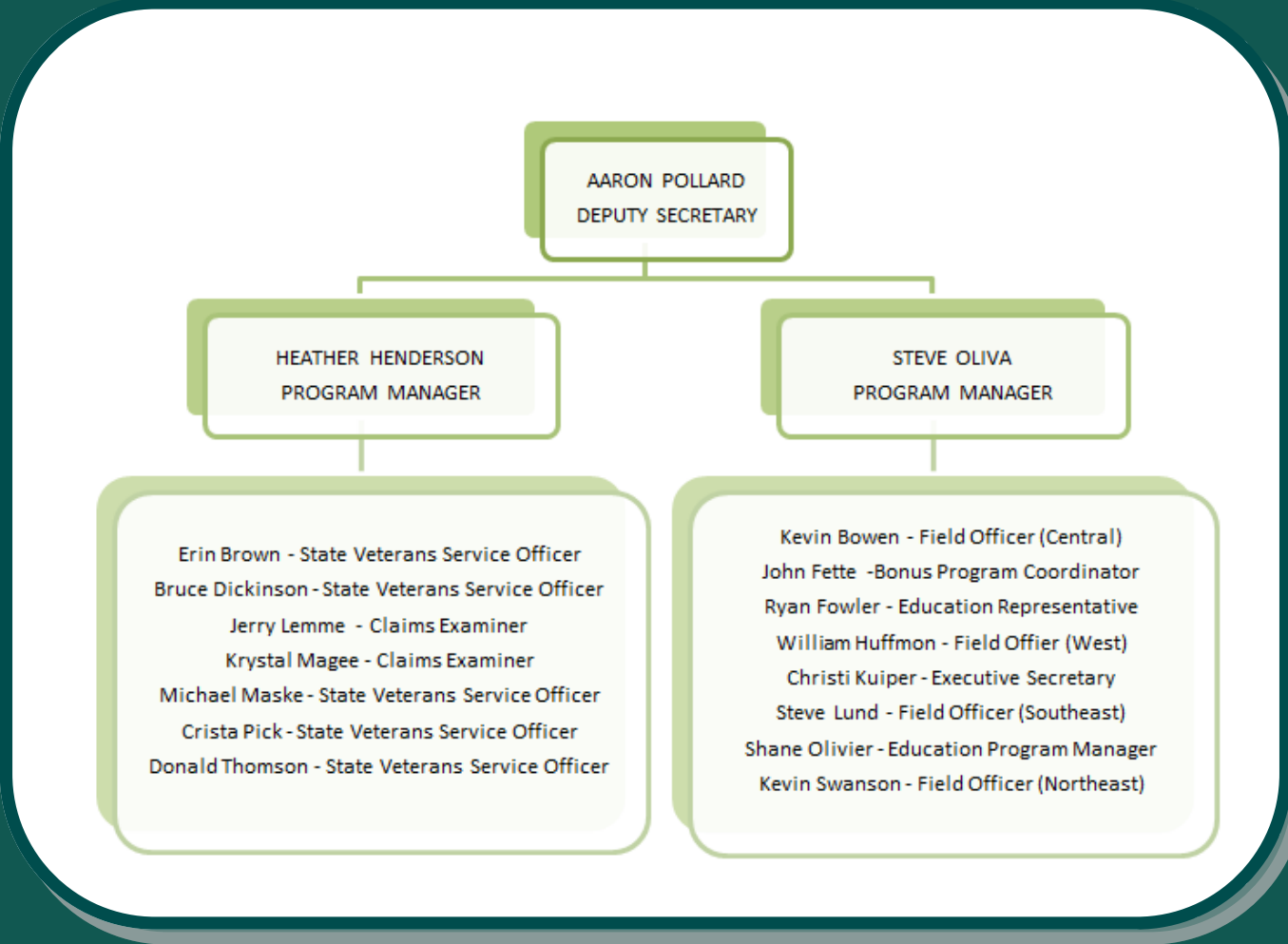
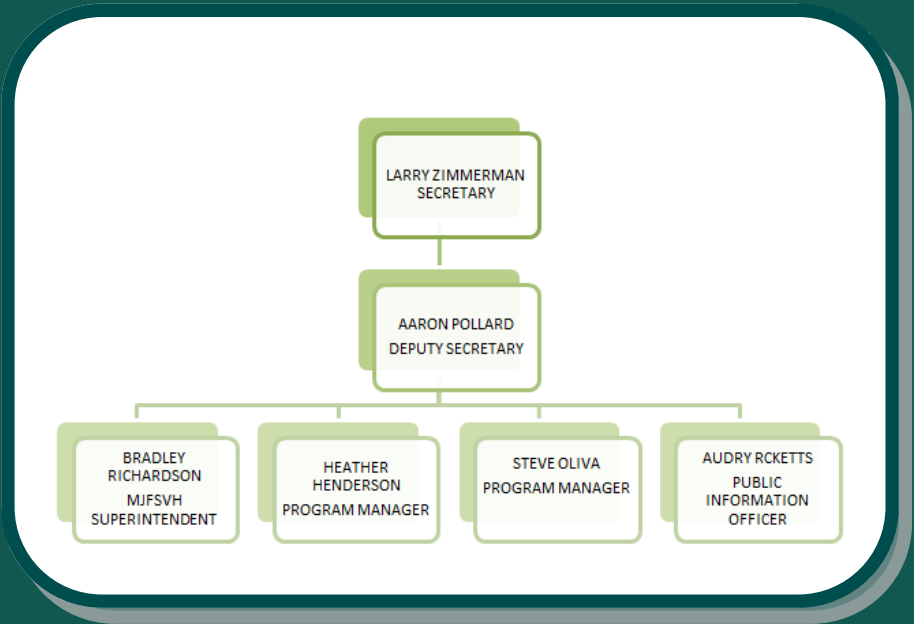
## SUPERINTENDENT

Brad Richardson  
Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans  
Home  
2500 Minnekahta Avenue  
Hot Springs, SD 57747  
Phone: 605-745-5127 (Ext. 311)  
Fax: 605-745-5547  
Email: [brad.richardson@state.sd.us](mailto:brad.richardson@state.sd.us)



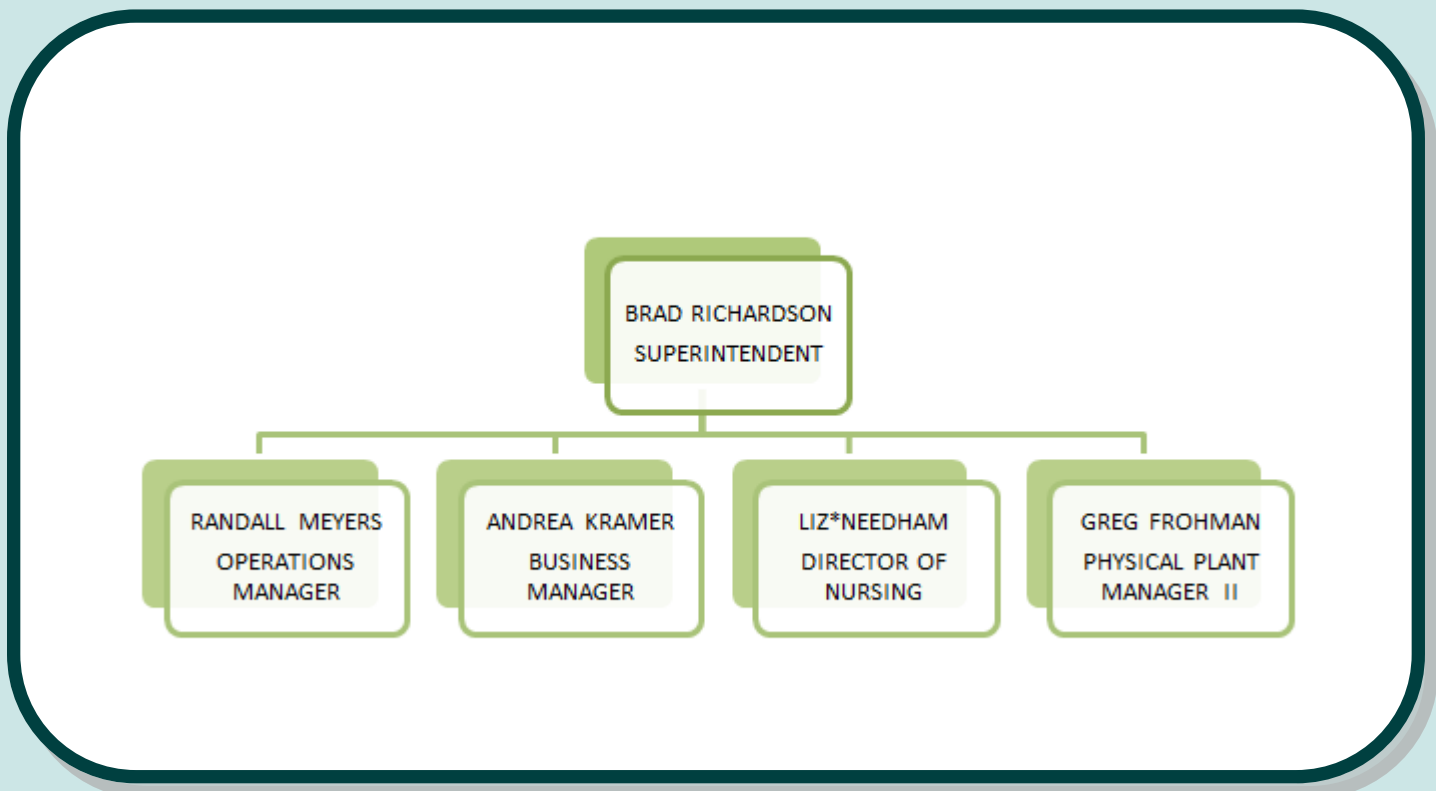


# ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS





# MICHAEL J. FITZMAURICE STATE VETEANS HOME ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



# STATE VETERANS HOME EMPLOYEES

## ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

Andrea Kramer  
Randall Meyers  
Lisa Olstad  
Brad Richardson  
Heather Schroeder  
Danielle Sexton  
Ralph Sowder  
Mathew Steffen  
Gayle Tescher  
Stachia Walker

## NURSING SERVICES

David Beck  
Marlena Boro  
Laura Burden  
Keaton Cummings  
Dyna Ferry  
Doug Greer  
Deb Grismer  
Michelle Gross  
Laura Inman  
John Lane  
Erica McMillin  
Julie Mossman  
Pamela Murray  
Liz \*Needham  
Ann Parsells  
Shirley Schumacher  
Patricia Sescher  
Pam Smith  
Lawrence Ulrich  
Michael Walker  
Raymond Walker  
Art Weitschat  
Susan Wilcox

## NURSING CARE UNIT

Tama Ambruster  
Mary Bledsoe  
Wendy Brehe  
Cheyenne Burdette  
Donna Dryden  
Krystal Cunningham  
Richard Gunhammer  
Michelle Keifer  
Shawn Parahams  
Marissa Parker  
Ann Remington  
Erwin Ranon  
Brenda Schnackenberg  
Kathleen Schuman  
Angela Stanton  
David Steffen  
Marilyn Torres  
Joseph Two Bear  
Patricia Waters  
Destiny Willey

## RESIDENTIAL LIVING SERVICES

Traci Bach  
Danuta Cachro  
Donna Campbell  
Jean Cunningham  
Dawn Haines  
Margaret Hupp  
Mary Kay Payton  
Kandis Renstrom

## CUSTODIAL SERVICES

Jerrie Alberts  
Katrina Bounting  
Susan Brafford  
Victoria Christensen  
Ruby Farrell  
Eunice Forney  
Purvis Red Owl  
Jeffrey Tarrell

## SPECIAL CARE UNIT SERVICES

Tiffany Alexander  
Richelle Bounting  
Shannon Campbell  
Lark Durland  
Beverly Dyslin  
Dawn Haines  
Cynthia Hughes  
Jennifer Keifer  
Ashly Madrid  
Adam Miller  
Jamie Moreno  
Audrey Murray  
Denise Popescu  
Nadya Powers  
Karlo Reyes  
Monica Rose  
Candace Shelton  
Marissa Shook  
Lynn Two Bears  
Almira White Hawk

## SUPPORT SERVICES

Thomas Beougher  
John Bettelyoun  
Robert Bledsoe  
Gregory Frohman  
Robert Halls  
Macrina Hayne  
Michael Hewitt  
Jerry Huddleston  
Thomas Inman  
Leslie Keith  
William Kirkpatrick  
Daniel Lang  
Dennis Nagel  
Richard Oliver  
Ronald Richards  
Paul Valandra  
Curtiss Wilde



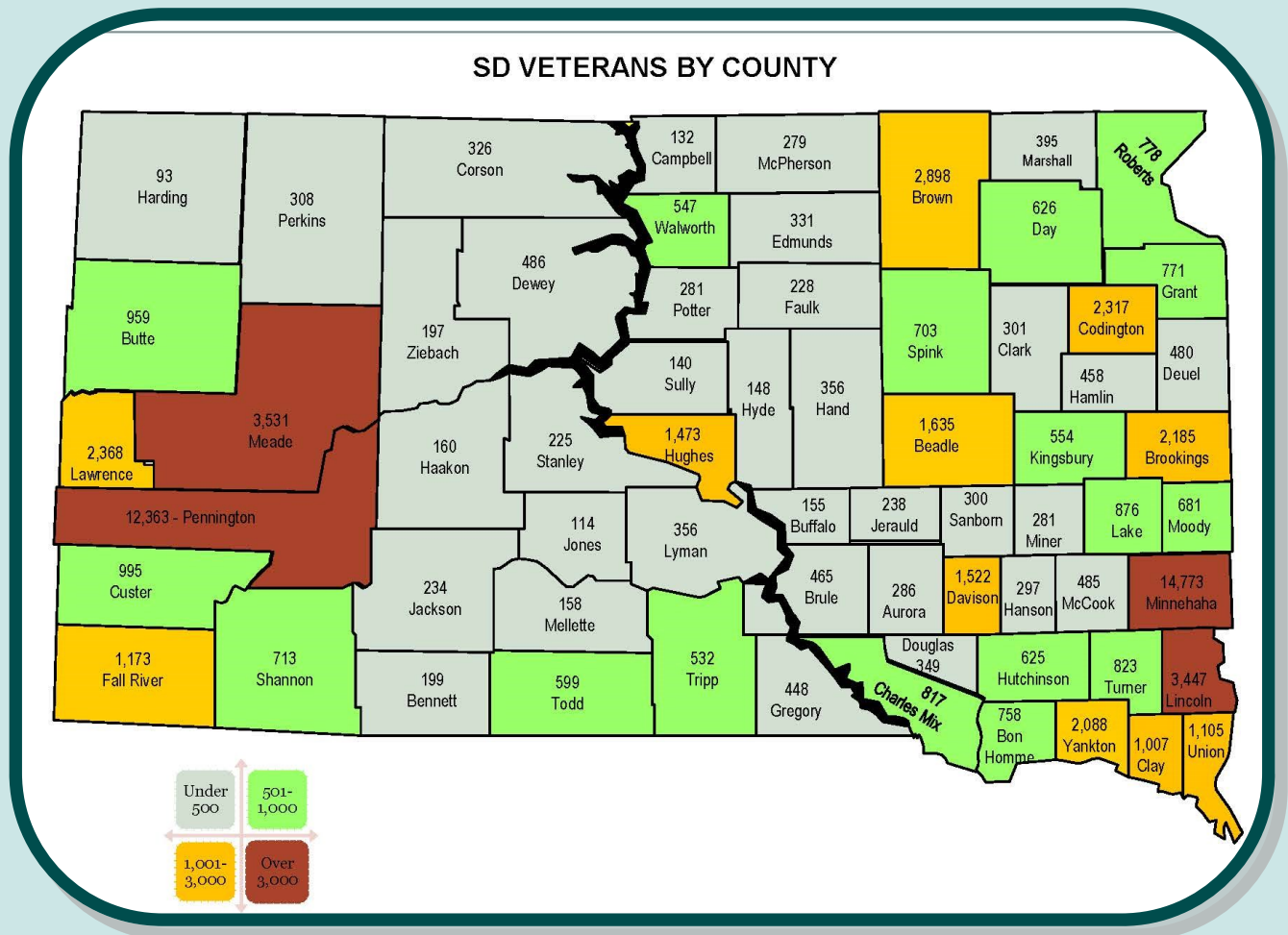


# BUDGET

Department of Veterans Affairs	FY2013	FY2014	Change from Prior Fiscal Year
Personal Services	\$ 4,737,731	\$ 5,103,609	7.72%
Operating Expenses	\$ 4,784,911	\$ 3,321,049	-30.59%
Headstone & Burial Grants	\$ 32,495	\$ 36,764	13.14%
Grants to Regental & Tech Schools	\$ 600,000		
Costs new construction	\$ 1,611,214	\$ 24,714	
<b>Special Funds</b>			
Bonus Claims	\$ 213,610	\$ 172,460	-19.26%
<b>Receipts</b>			
Medicaid Collections	\$ 682,912	\$ 676,124	-0.99%
VA Per Diem	\$ 2,276,952	\$ 2,726,197	19.73%
Resident Rents	\$ 2,224,250	\$ 2,048,187	-7.92%

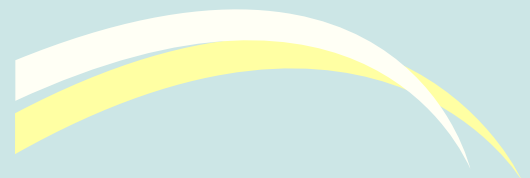


# VETERANS BY COUNTY



South Dakota’s efforts to honor and support our Nation’s veterans are a testament to its commitment to the men and women who served in uniform.

Veterans are one of this country’s most valuable assets and SDDVA is on the front line of providing assistance to our 75,000 veterans and their families.



# LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

## LEGISLATION OF INTEREST TO VETERANS

*The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs introduced two bills during the 2014 South Dakota Legislative Session. House Bill 1111—an act to revise previous session laws related to the design, construction, and equipping of a veterans home, Senate Bill 151—an act to revise the appointment process for the State Veterans Home superintendent.*



**HB 1060—Purpose:** revise certain provisions regarding military specialty plates.

**HB 1111—Purpose:** revise certain provisions related to the design, construction, and equipping of a veterans home near Hot Springs, to make an appropriation therefor, and to declare an emergency.

**HB 1150—Purpose:** require that the pledge of allegiance to the flag of the United States be recited at the start of each school day in every public school classroom.

**HB 1159—Purpose:** revise the documentation requirements for designation as a veteran on driver licenses, permits, and non-driver identification cards.

**HB 1185—Purpose:** allow certain veterans and family members of residents to obtain nonresident waterfowl hunting privileges, and to establish a penalty.

**SB 61—Purpose:** revise certain provisions regarding organization, first responder, and organ donor emblem specialty plates for motor vehicles.

**SB 132—Purpose:** provide for the development of a rural 211 system for the purpose of providing access to all South Dakotans who need information about community resources and disaster response resources and to make an appropriation therefor.

**SB 151—Purpose:** revise the appointment process for the State Veterans Home superintendent.

**SB 159—Purpose:** revise the General Appropriations Act for the Department of Veterans Affairs for 2014.

**SB 171—Purpose:** recognize certain federal forms as sufficient to direct the disposition of the body of a service-member.

**HCR 1004—Purpose:** recognizing Hot Springs as "The Veterans Town" - scheduled for House consideration.

**HCR 1012—Purpose:** recognizing the honor and remember flag as the designated symbol of South Dakota's concern and commitment to honoring and remembering all members of the United States Armed Forces who have lost their lives while serving, or as a result of service, and their families.

**HCR 1013—Purpose:** commemorating the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 and "The Star Spangled Banner", and recognizing the historical significance, heroic human endeavor, and sacrifices of members of the United States Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Revenue Marine Service, and state militias, during and since the War of 1812.

# BENEFIT SERVICES

Benefit Services is comprised of a program manager, four field service officers, one veterans bonus claims examiner, the State Approving Agency education program manager and education representative, public information officer, executive assistant and financial director,

Our field officers assist South Dakota's veterans in gaining access to the benefits to which they are entitled through their service and sacrifice. Among these benefits and services are compensation for service-connected disability or death, income-based pensions, medical care, educational benefits, and the VA home loan guaranty program.

While our field officers are able to help many veterans over the phone, much of the assistance takes place at a county or tribal veterans service office. During these face-to-face contacts, field officers guide veterans through the myriad of steps required to file a federal VA claim.



Developing a solid claim is more than a matter of completing the application. Supporting documents, sometimes decades old, must be retrieved from federal and state archives. The process is labor-intensive. A field officer may spend an hour interviewing a veteran, but then spend substantial hours locating, researching, and reviewing records and completing the necessary supporting documentation. Our field officers are accredited with the:

- \* South Dakota Dept. of Veterans Affairs
- \* Veterans of Foreign Wars
- \* American Legion
- \* The Retired Enlisted Association
- \* Non-Commissioned Officers Association
- \* American Ex-Prisoners of War
- \* Military Order of the Purple Heart

SDDVA currently, holds Power of Attorney (POA) for over 50,000 veterans in South Dakota, which authorizes our team to represent and provide necessary assistance and advocacy to veterans and their families.

When field officers are not working claims for veterans, they are on the road conducting outreach and training County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers. On average, our field officers visit each office at least eight times per year.



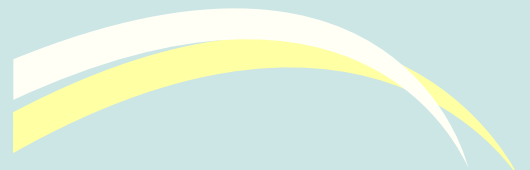
# OUTREACH

The Department remains dedicated to frontline outreach to South Dakota's veterans. The Department consistently puts forth significant effort to enhance and expand its already extensive outreach operations. Regular outreach activities by the Department includes, but is not limited to, veterans who are incarcerated, hospitalized, homebound, and homeless.

Outreach is conducted at job fairs, stand downs, home shows, congressional forums, Veterans Day programs, Vocational Rehab conferences, Veterans Stand Downs, SD Coalition of Military Family symposiums, South Dakota State Fair, Memorial Day programs, Yellow Ribbon events, South Dakota County Officials and Commissioners conferences, Department of Social Services Adult and Aging conference and numerous veteran-related events around the state.

Staff also regularly attend Veterans Council meetings, Vietnam Veterans of America conferences, American Legion conferences, and the Disabled American Veterans conferences.

With the kickoff of Operation RAV in 2014, the Department tripled the number of outreach events that we participated in. Operation RAV afforded the Department the opportunity to participate in over 150 open house events—blanketing 95% of the state.



# CLAIMS SERVICES

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) Claims Office is located within the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Office on the VA Medical Center campus in Sioux Falls. The Claims Office is staffed with the following professionals: two claims examiners, five state veterans service officers, one field service officer and the claims office supervisor. The Deputy Secretary also maintains his office on the VA campus in Sioux Falls.

The Sioux Falls Claims Office is responsible for all claims that fall under one of the seven Veterans Service Organizations that SDDVA is accredited through to represent and advocate for veterans and their families before the VA.

- South Dakota Dept. of Veterans Affairs
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- American Legion
- The Retired Enlisted Association
- Non-Commissioned Officers Association
- American Ex-Prisoners of War
- Military Order of the Purple Heart



Our Department's goal is to obtain the maximum benefits that are earned by veterans and their eligible family members earned through service to our country. These benefits range from monthly monetary payments for disabilities incurred in or caused by the veteran's military service, monthly non-service connected pension payments for lower income veterans/widows/widowers/dependent children or helpless children, dependency and indemnity compensation payments for widows/widowers/dependent or helpless children of veterans whose death was related to their military service, etc. The range of benefits available to eligible veterans and their families is vast.

The Claims Office personnel must be knowledgeable, professional, flexible and proficient in all areas of federal and state regulations pertaining to veterans programs and services.

Keeping valuable, trained and professional employees is one of the Department's most significant challenges. The VA has a history of hiring our employees as they recognize their knowledge and work ethic that SDDVA has developed in our employees. 2014 brought a much needed and deserved pay grade increase that was implemented early in the year increasing the starting salaries for the service officer positions by nearly \$2 per hour.

SDDVA staff are responsible for securing significant federal dollars paid to eligible veterans and their family members within the borders of the state, significantly impacting South Dakota's economy. There were many changes within the office in 2014. 3 new state veterans service officers, a new state field officer and claims examiner joined the team. Deputy Secretary Pollard moved to a separate office on the Sioux Falls VA campus. The old outdated cubicles were replaced with metal floor-to ceiling walls and doors to provide more privacy to our veterans. A separate break room was added so employees can enjoy their lunch and have conversations without disturbing others who are working. The end of 2014 brought more construction to the claims office with the installation of a new HVAC system and LED lighting. We look forward to continuing to update our office environment in 2015!

# ECONOMIC IMPACT

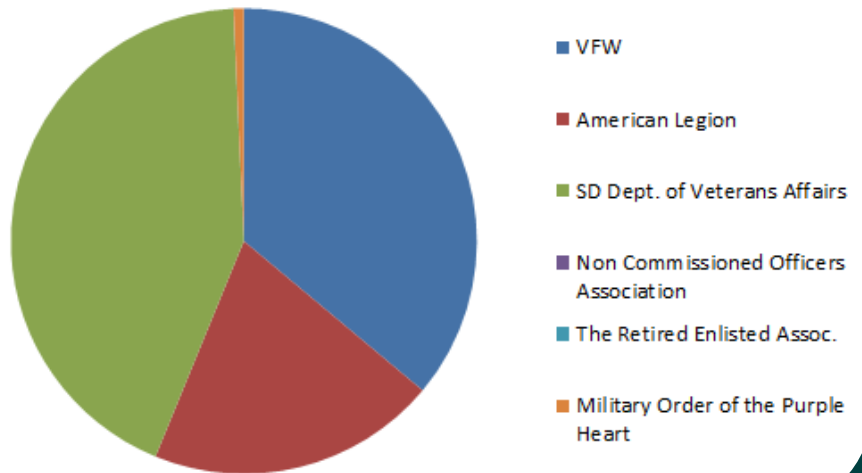
Through the efforts of the employees within the Department of Veterans Affairs and with our County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers and other partners the Department has seen significant gains in the amount of benefits that clients whom we've assisted and represented receive.

As of December 31, 2014, total awards for CY14 exceeded \$144,202,033. It is easily assumed that the federal monetary benefits received by South Dakota residents are being largely spent within the boundaries of South Dakota helping to support our strong economy.

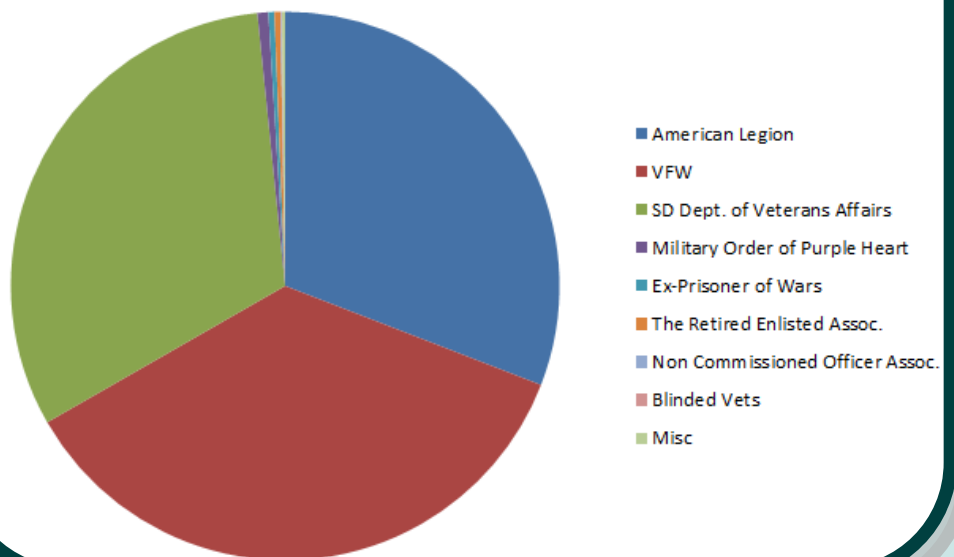
Our employees work diligently to insure that their clients receive excellent customer service and the maximum benefits that they have earned through their military service.

There are many variables that can and do affect the monetary awards that are reported above. If the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs has slow production months this will affect how sharply our monetary numbers increase.

**CY14 One Time Retro Awards by Organization - Total \$8,047,443.92**



**CY14 Total Running Monetary Awards (By Service Organization) - Total \$144,202,033.60**



# SD GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF U.S. DVA EXPENDITURES

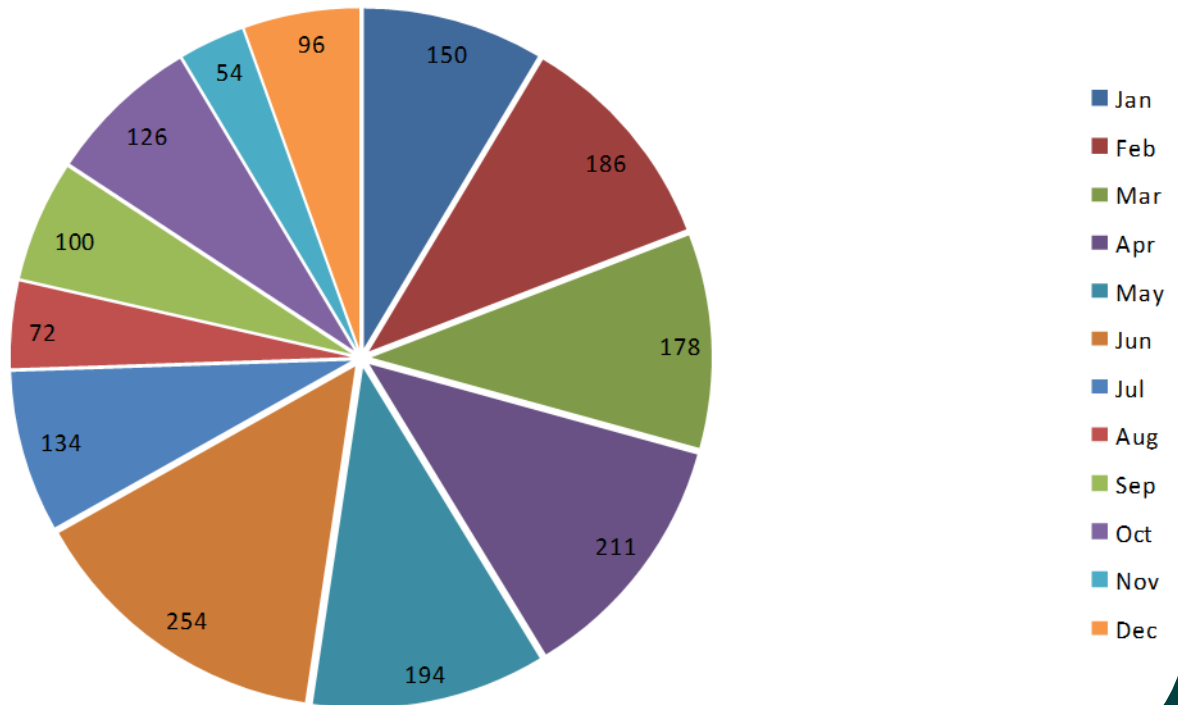
FY13 Summary of Expenditures by State Expenditures in \$000s										
County/ Congressional District	Veteran Populatio n*	Total Expenditur e	Compens ation & Pension	Constructi on	Education & Vocational	Loan Guaranty#	General Operating Expenses	Insurance & Indemnities	Medical Care	Unique Patients**
AURORA	281	\$ 1,596	\$ 836	\$ -	\$ 73	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2	\$ 685	100
BEADLE	1,630	\$ 6,591	\$ 2,930	\$ -	\$ 111	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 86	\$ 3,464	472
BENNETT	196	\$ 1,817	\$ 595	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 1,222	101
BON HOMME	760	\$ 4,686	\$ 1,298	\$ -	\$ 130	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 78	\$ 3,179	275
BROOKINGS	2,159	\$ 10,032	\$ 4,166	\$ -	\$ 1,556	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 163	\$ 4,148	647
BROWN	2,862	\$ 14,912	\$ 6,463	\$ -	\$ 900	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 105	\$ 7,445	1,307
BRULE	463	\$ 1,979	\$ 848	\$ -	\$ 97	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 29	\$ 1,005	135
BUFFALO	157	\$ 914	\$ 494	\$ -	\$ 38	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6	\$ 376	31
BUTTE	967	\$ 10,959	\$ 3,778	\$ -	\$ 190	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20	\$ 6,971	502
CAMPBELL	127	\$ 468	\$ 257	\$ -	\$ 6	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 205	60
CHARLES MIX	816	\$ 4,770	\$ 1,715	\$ -	\$ 194	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 138	\$ 2,724	268
CLARK	295	\$ 1,858	\$ 939	\$ -	\$ 13	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 13	\$ 893	115
CLAY	1,006	\$ 5,522	\$ 2,084	\$ -	\$ 1,031	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 71	\$ 2,336	300
CODINGTON	2,283	\$ 11,261	\$ 5,071	\$ -	\$ 709	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 62	\$ 5,418	914
CORSON	326	\$ 2,628	\$ 1,107	\$ -	\$ 31	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6	\$ 1,485	142
CUSTER	991	\$ 9,814	\$ 3,262	\$ -	\$ 211	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 86	\$ 6,256	525
DAVISON	1,523	\$ 7,556	\$ 3,223	\$ -	\$ 671	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50	\$ 3,612	501
DAY	618	\$ 3,249	\$ 1,608	\$ -	\$ 21	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 116	\$ 1,504	273
DEUEL	478	\$ 2,162	\$ 944	\$ -	\$ 89	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 68	\$ 1,061	163
DEWEY	485	\$ 3,791	\$ 1,287	\$ -	\$ 26	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9	\$ 2,468	208
DOUGLAS	346	\$ 1,199	\$ 532	\$ -	\$ 21	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18	\$ 628	92
EDMUNDS	319	\$ 1,433	\$ 578	\$ -	\$ 71	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ 779	165
FALL RIVER	1,137	\$ 31,910	\$ 8,343	\$ -	\$ 215	\$ -	\$ 546	\$ 58	\$ 22,748	978
FAULK	220	\$ 858	\$ 334	\$ -	\$ 9	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 3	\$ 513	94
GRANT	768	\$ 3,763	\$ 1,898	\$ -	\$ 115	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 37	\$ 1,713	266
GREGORY	438	\$ 3,067	\$ 1,187	\$ -	\$ 54	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6	\$ 1,819	185
HAAKON	155	\$ 882	\$ 243	\$ -	\$ 26	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 613	72
HAMLIN	458	\$ 2,304	\$ 1,036	\$ -	\$ 50	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20	\$ 1,199	190
HAND	350	\$ 1,213	\$ 568	\$ -	\$ 16	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 26	\$ 604	139
HANSON	305	\$ 1,902	\$ 1,024	\$ -	\$ 28	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6	\$ 844	139
HARDING	92	\$ 326	\$ 174	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 152	29
HUGHES	1,468	\$ 7,873	\$ 3,194	\$ -	\$ 319	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 168	\$ 4,194	696
HUTCHINSON	619	\$ 3,134	\$ 1,264	\$ -	\$ 119	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 40	\$ 1,712	225
HYDE	147	\$ 552	\$ 259	\$ -	\$ 26	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 267	54
JACKSON	229	\$ 1,730	\$ 576	\$ -	\$ 8	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,146	89
JERAULD	233	\$ 809	\$ 424	\$ -	\$ 40	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2	\$ 343	73
JONES	110	\$ 275	\$ 59	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 216	35
KINGSBURY	545	\$ 3,213	\$ 1,397	\$ -	\$ 99	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 34	\$ 1,683	202
LAKE	867	\$ 6,509	\$ 2,602	\$ -	\$ 489	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 235	\$ 3,183	377
LAWRENCE	2,339	\$ 23,878	\$ 7,406	\$ -	\$ 793	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 178	\$ 15,501	1,300
LINCOLN	3,531	\$ 18,583	\$ 7,173	\$ -	\$ 1,692	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 158	\$ 9,561	1,120
LYMAN	350	\$ 1,540	\$ 638	\$ -	\$ 41	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 12	\$ 849	112
MCCOOK	480	\$ 3,462	\$ 1,085	\$ -	\$ 177	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 100	\$ 2,100	189
MCPHERSON	274	\$ 988	\$ 454	\$ -	\$ 18	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2	\$ 514	124
MARSHALL	395	\$ 2,046	\$ 745	\$ -	\$ 17	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 86	\$ 1,197	158
MEADE	3,577	\$ 47,567	\$ 11,553	\$ 1,605	\$ 1,745	\$ -	\$ 3,088	\$ 298	\$ 29,279	1,612
MELLETTTE	155	\$ 803	\$ 308	\$ -	\$ 31	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 463	55
MINER	275	\$ 1,059	\$ 450	\$ -	\$ 11	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 229	\$ 370	63
MINNEHAHA	14,689	\$ 113,020	\$ 39,665	\$ 371	\$ 5,773	\$ -	\$ 6,758	\$ 1,049	\$ 59,404	4,824
MOODY	680	\$ 3,537	\$ 1,259	\$ -	\$ 140	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 18	\$ 2,121	174
PENNINGTON	12,433	\$ 112,361	\$ 47,255	\$ -	\$ 10,268	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,094	\$ 53,744	5,468
PERKINS	301	\$ 1,990	\$ 638	\$ -	\$ 43	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 46	\$ 1,263	150
POTTER	272	\$ 1,402	\$ 575	\$ -	\$ 30	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 796	124
ROBERTS	770	\$ 6,311	\$ 2,802	\$ -	\$ 132	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 37	\$ 3,341	347
SANBORN	297	\$ 1,149	\$ 457	\$ -	\$ 36	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1	\$ 654	73
SHANNON	721	\$ 9,189	\$ 3,415	\$ -	\$ 196	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9	\$ 5,568	314
SPINK	702	\$ 2,936	\$ 1,261	\$ -	\$ 38	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 105	\$ 1,531	265
STANLEY	226	\$ 1,267	\$ 483	\$ -	\$ 59	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5	\$ 720	126
SULLY	136	\$ 338	\$ 107	\$ -	\$ 19	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 7	\$ 205	52
TODD	602	\$ 3,716	\$ 1,548	\$ -	\$ 84	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4	\$ 2,080	166
TRIPP	516	\$ 3,273	\$ 1,180	\$ -	\$ 39	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6	\$ 2,048	268
TURNER	817	\$ 4,366	\$ 1,814	\$ -	\$ 149	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 15	\$ 2,387	285
UNION	1,101	\$ 6,676	\$ 2,776	\$ -	\$ 389	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 162	\$ 3,349	378
WALWORTH	535	\$ 3,304	\$ 1,156	\$ -	\$ 110	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 16	\$ 2,022	284
YANKTON	2,078	\$ 9,653	\$ 4,305	\$ -	\$ 535	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50	\$ 4,763	536
ZIEBACH	206	\$ 554	\$ 243	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4	\$ 307	38
<b>SOUTH DAKOTA</b>	<b>75,687</b>	<b>\$ 564,489</b>	<b>\$ 209,347</b>	<b>\$ 1,976</b>	<b>\$ 30,364</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 10,392</b>	<b>\$ 5,461</b>	<b>\$ 306,949</b>	<b>29,744</b>

NOTE—Dollar Columns are in thousands



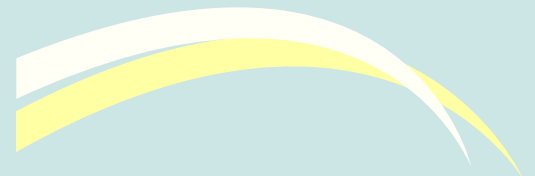
# ECONOMIC IMPACT

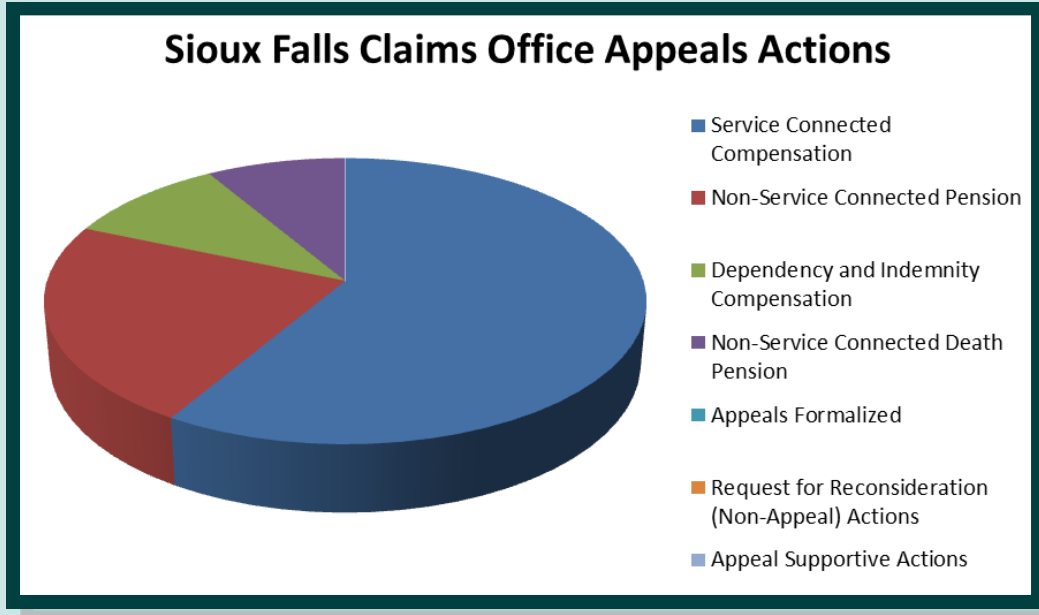
## CY14 Brokered Claims by Month



The Federal VA has vowed to reduce and eliminate the backlog of compensation claims that were pending within the VA. To accomplish this the VA brokered claims from Regional Offices with backlogs to Regional Offices that did not have backlogs and could support an increased workload. The Sioux Falls VA Regional Office was one of these offices that were identified to broker claims.

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs vowed to treat and provide the same excellent level of customer service and expertise to these claims as well as maintaining our existing workload. This chart shows the number of brokered cases our staff handled.





Another facet of our staff's duties is their participation in the VA Appeals Process. The appeals process within the VA is complex and comes with its own set of laws, rules, regulations and processes.

Our staff assists veterans in preparing their appeal, as well as arguing their case all the way through the process up to, and including, the Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA). Throughout this process, our staff researches complex VA laws and compiles legal briefs to aid in the likelihood of getting veterans and their eligible dependents the benefits sought.

During this process our clients have the opportunity to have two hearings, one at the local level with a Decision Review Officer and one at the national level with a BVA Law Judge. BVA Law Judges are located in Washington D.C. and either travel to our jurisdiction or participate in video teleconference hearings held at the Sioux Falls VA Regional Office. Both types of hearings are official proceedings that become a matter of record within the veteran's VA Claims File.

The prosecution of veterans' disagreements with, and appeals of, U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs rating decisions may result in retroactive benefits, compensation, and debt relief to veterans. The dollar amounts awarded to veterans, their dependents, and survivors are tracked as a performance measure of successful client claim resolutions. The date of claim for a veteran's disability claim is the date the claim is submitted and accepted by the US Department of Veterans Affairs. A decision is usually made several months or even years later, and the veteran is awarded a monthly monetary benefit from the date of the claim, until the receipt of the benefit, resulting in a retroactive benefit. Retroactive benefits and monthly compensation represent dollars that are directly infused into South Dakota's economy.

## VETERANS BONUS

South Dakota has a history of thanking residents of this state who serve on active duty during a wartime period with a veteran's bonus payment. This tradition goes back nearly 100 years beginning with payment to those who honorably served during the Spanish American War, the Philippine Insurrection and World War I. It continued with bonus payments to those who served during World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Shield/Storm.

In 2004, the South Dakota legislature re-opened the Veterans Bonus program providing payment to those with honorable service during the current War on Terrorism. As with previous programs those who serve in a war zone or area of

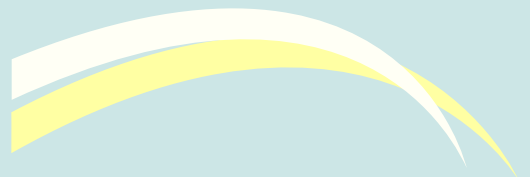
hostilities are eligible for a higher bonus payment than those whose entire period of service was in non-hostile areas. Under the current program, hostile area service qualifies for a payment of up to \$500 and non-hostile area service qualifies for a payment of up to \$240. Individuals with a service connected disability rated at 10%, or more, disabling automatically qualify for the maximum payment of \$500.

Through the end of December 2014 – 10,950 South Dakota service men and women have received bonus payments totaling \$4,261,130 under the current bonus program.



## HEADSTONE SETTING FEE

Under SDCL 33A-5-4, the Department will pay \$100 towards the cost of setting a government issued headstone or marker at the grave of a veteran who was a resident of the State of South Dakota for one year immediately prior to entering military service or one year immediately prior to death. The grave must be located within the borders of South Dakota. In CY2014 the Department paid out \$40,700 in headstone setting fees.



# HOMELESS VETERANS

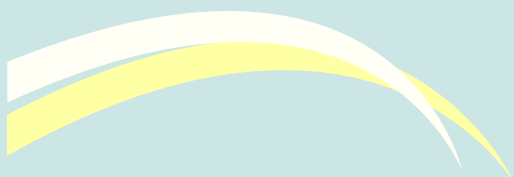
SDDVA is an active member of the South Dakota Homeless Consortium. The South Dakota Housing for the Homeless Consortium was formed in 2000. It is a state wide organization consisting of service providers, individuals, city/county governments, faith-based organizations and state government all working together to address homelessness in our state. The Consortium believes that housing and other basic human needs should be within everyone's reach in an affordable and dignified manner. Their vision is to empower homeless individuals and families to regain self-sufficiency to the maximum extent possible. The Consortium has also expanded its efforts and knowledge of homelessness. One of the goals of the Consortium is to end homelessness among veterans in five years.

The Department is also a member of the Inter-Agency Council on Homelessness. The Council is challenged with a variety of duties including identifying and defining homeless issues, determining effective strategies for the prevention of homelessness in South Dakota.

Information sharing is a key to helping those veterans who are homeless or about to become homeless. The success of our efforts to help veterans depends on this. The South Dakota Department Of Veterans Affairs web site [www.vetaffairs.sd.gov](http://www.vetaffairs.sd.gov) is one of those keys. This web site provides veterans and their families with a complete list of County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers in South Dakota.

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs web site, <http://www.va.gov> is also a great place to get help and information for anything that concerns veterans and their families. Homeless coordinators are available at any federal Veterans Administration Office. The toll free number for the United States Department Of Veterans Affairs is [800-827-1000].

A complete list of homeless shelters and facilities available for veterans in South Dakota can be found on our website: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/resources/homelessshelters.aspx>



The primary responsibility and focus of the South Dakota State Approving Agency (SAA) is to review, evaluate and approve quality programs of education and training to ensure that our veterans are getting quality education and training while using their GI BILL benefits.

Our SAA staff continue to conduct on-site supervisory visits to approved institutions and schools seeking approval. They continue to provide technical assistance to all interested parties and are engaged in outreach activities to foster the usage of the GI Bill.

SAA staff serves as advocates for quality education and training for veterans and their families. They have become educational partners with the institutions themselves, facilitating even greater and more diverse educational opportunities for our veterans.

The Department currently has a federal contract with the VA, which averages about \$150,000 in reimbursement to the Department per year.

#### 2014 Stats at a glance —

- \* Approved over 38 new Institute of Higher Learning (IHL) programs at colleges across the state
- \* Approved and enrolled 80 new veterans into OJT/APP programs
- \* Conducted compliance audits at 16 schools
- \* Conducted compliance audits at 20 employers
- \* Have 45 active colleges, high schools, and technical schools providing education to GI BILL recipients
- \* Have 17 other approved schools that did not have any GI BILL recipients, but retained approval
- \* Approved 20 new employers for GI BILL use for OJT/APP
- \* Currently have 207 GI BILL recipients enrolled in OJT/APP programs
- \* Currently there are 2,317 GI BILL recipients enrolled in schools across South Dakota



# EDUCATION—continued

## Active Approved Schools in South Dakota

The federal contract has changed from supervisory visits to much more comprehensive compliance surveys. The new surveys are significantly more stringent, and a visit to a school which previously took two hours can now take as long as three days.

AETech—Rapid City  
Augustana College—Sioux Falls  
Avera Health, CPE Program—Sioux Falls  
Black Hills Beauty College, Inc.—Rapid City  
Black Hills State University—Spearfish  
Career Learning Center of the Black Hills—Rapid City  
Central High School—Rapid City  
Colorado Technical University—Sioux Falls  
Cornerstone Bible Institute—Hot Springs  
Dakota State University—Madison  
Dakota Wesleyan University—Mitchell  
Desaree and Company School of Beauty—Sturgis  
De Smet High School—De Smet  
Deubrook High School—White  
Douglas High School—Box Elder  
Emmery-Riddle Aeronautical University—Ellsworth Air Force Base  
Globe University—Sioux Falls  
Headlines Academy—Rapid City  
Highmore High School—Highmore  
Hot Rod Institute—Rapid City  
Kilian Community College—Sioux Falls  
Lake Area Technical institute—Watertown  
Mitchell Technical Institute—Mitchell  
Mount Marty College—Yankton  
National American University—Rapid City and Sioux Falls  
Northern State University—Aberdeen  
Oglala Lakota College—Kyle  
Presentation College—Aberdeen  
Rapid City Regional Hospital—Rapid City  
Sinte Gleska University—Mission  
Sioux Falls Seminary—Sioux Falls  
Sisseton Wahpeton College—Sisseton  
South Dakota School of Massage Therapist—Sioux Falls  
South Dakota School of Mines—Rapid City  
South Dakota State University—Brookings  
Southeast Technical Institute—Sioux Falls  
Stevens High School—Rapid City  
Stewart School—Sioux Falls  
TEACHOUT Welding—Rapid City  
University of South Dakota—Vermillion  
University of Sioux Falls—Sioux Falls



# UPDATES FROM EDUCATION PARTNERS

## *Northern State University*

Northern State University offers numerous services for our veterans, military students, and dependents of veterans. We have a Student Veteran Resource Center that offers free coffee, free printing, two computers, a CAC reader, TV, dvd player, and snacks. This room houses our VA Work Study student, who can help students use their benefits and direct them around campus. NSU also has a Counseling Center that is available for all students and is completely confidential. Other services include Career Services, Tutoring, and Disability Services. We offer a benefit orientation in the fall for students to gain information about the benefits they are receiving and any recent changes in those benefits. There are also individual information sessions that can be arranged by appointment. NSU also has a Veteran's Organization that does on campus events for students as well as events in our community. Registration priority for students receiving benefits is another one of our services. The students who receive VA benefits are able to register on the first available day regardless of the amount of credits they have earned. This gives them the advantage to get in the classes they need to graduate to use their eligibility wisely. We also award our veterans and military students a graduation honor cord to wear at graduation and keep at no cost to them.

For more information go to: <http://www.northern.edu/student-services/Pages/veterans/resources.aspx>.

## *Black Hills State University*

The mission of the Black Hills State University Veterans Service Office is to assist veterans and dependents make the best of their educational benefits for academic success.

Purpose:

- Coordinate an orientation program specifically for veterans
- House a federal certifying official to assist with financial aid
- Assist students who are deployed and still enrolled at BHSU
- Provide additional support to the BHSU Vets Club
- Collaborate with the city and county agencies that assist veterans
- Work with returning National Guard units and other active-duty personnel to assist with admission/re-admission to BHSU
- Work collaboratively with Financial Aid, Counseling Center and Disability Services to provide services and support

Student Support Services:

BHSU cultivates a holistic environment for all students, including veterans, by creating an educational setting where academic achievement and social development are equally appreciated. Committed to fulfilling the needs of its diverse student body, Black Hills State has developed a comprehensive network of support services to facilitate the academic experience and enrich students' lives.

Network partners include:

Admissions Office, Student Success Center, Housing and Residential Life Counseling Services, Graduate School/Academic Affairs, and BHSU Vets Club.

For more information go to: <http://www.bhsu.edu/VeteransAffairs/tabid/9889/Default.aspx>.

# UPDATES FROM EDUCATION PARTNERS

## *South Dakota School of Mines and Technology*

SDSM&T is proud that, for five consecutive years, it has been ranked in the top ten colleges nationwide (currently #6) for military and veteran student support in *Military Times* magazine's annual "Best for Vets: Colleges" survey. We have additionally been designated a "Military Friendly" school for 6 consecutive years by *G.I. Jobs* magazine.

The main reason for these awards is that the School of Mines offers military members and Veterans not just assistance, but more importantly, support. Our "village of support" is campus-wide, beginning at the top with our president, an Air Force Veteran (and graduate of the Air Force Academy). We also offer the following services and support to assist students with their transition to student life and aid them in their retention: on-site and thoroughly knowledgeable (20+ years) VA benefits adviser; Veterans' orientations; college success and financial literacy workshops; faculty/staff training on Veterans' issues; Veteran's Day celebrations; annual military appreciation day at a campus football game; deployed student flag in front of the university student center that is raised when we have students deployed and lowered when they come home; active, SVA-affiliated Veteran's Club since 2006; TRIO Veterans Upward Bound affiliation since 2009; red, white, and blue honor cords for military students at graduation; emergency fund and scholarships specifically for Veterans; and Mount Rushmore Battalion ROTC based on campus. Additionally, our large Veterans Resource Center (VRC), launched in 2009, offers Veteran-to-Veteran tutoring in math, writing, sciences; resume development; scholarship search assistance; referrals to community Veterans' organizations; regular, monthly visits by a patient advocate from the VA Black Hills Health Care System; study tables; couches; recliners; printer/fax/scanner; refrigerator; flat-screen TV; lockers; microwave; beverages; snacks; bi-weekly potlucks. For science courses that are particularly challenging (e.g., chemistry, organic chemistry, physics), we have a physics professor emeritus who is also an Army/Vietnam Veteran and alum who tutors our military and Veteran students in the VRC.

Additional proof that this university is particularly supportive of its military students can be seen through testimonials supplied by some of our students themselves (see <http://www.sdsmt.edu/Campus-Life/Student-Services/Veterans-Resource-Center/Testimonials/>).

Lastly, the person who probably spends the most time working with and supporting the military and Veteran students is the VRC Director, who has managed the VRC since its inception in 2009, and whom the students have nicknamed "Godmother." She hails from a Navy family and is married to a retired Air Force Veteran, and also has a sincere, heartfelt passion for assisting her military students with transitioning to college and graduating. Her undergraduate background in psychology and master's degree in counseling (to include career counseling), along with her seven years of teaching writing to Veterans in the Veterans Upward Bound program, allow her to have the knowledge and experience to assist the students with academic and career advising, personal counseling, essay writing, resume development, and job interview tips. Also, she has an excellent rapport with every Veterans service organization in the Black Hills area, and is a member of the Black Hills Area Veterans Coordinating Commission. Our VRC, then, is a one-stop shop and "home away from home" for our military and Veteran students, and it's no wonder that the students say it's "like a family in the VRC." This type of atmosphere has made a positive impact on our students' retention and graduation rates.





# UPDATES FROM EDUCATION PARTNERS

## *South Dakota State University*

South Dakota State University (SDSU) offers a rich academic experience in an environment of inclusion and access through inspired, student-centered education, creative activities and research, innovation and engagement in support of our land grant mission. Students choose from 73 majors, 31 specializations, 73 minors, 32 Master's programs, 15 Ph.D. programs and 2 professional doctorates.

The SDSU Veterans Affairs Office is dedicated to providing military members, Veterans and their families the support they need to transition from military service to a college education. The Veteran Services Office is a comprehensive resource available to answer questions, certify enrollments and assist with academic progress monitoring while focusing on the unique needs of our military community.

SDSU offers strong student support services through our Veteran Resource Center (VRC). The VRC provides opportunities for peer-to-peer support for academics and wellness as well as camaraderie, mentoring and place to call home on campus. There are currently over 360 SDSU students receiving military education benefits and from August to November 2014 the campus VRC had over 1,200 student visits.

Programs offered at SDSU to military affiliated students and community members include: Monthly Combat Support Group led by the Vet Center, Semimonthly Veteran Writing Groups, Weekly Veterans tutoring Veterans sessions, Monthly Warrior Wellness Events, Suicide and Stress Management presentations, Two Federal Tuition Assistance (FTA) and State Tuition Assistance (STA) Workshops, Hero2Hire Presentations and Mock Interviews, Resume and Career Building Workshops, Paws for Vets, Air Force, Navy, Marines, Army and National Guard branch birthdays celebrations

SDSU is distinctive in the services that we provide to our student veterans, services members and dependents:

- Military Science has been taught with distinction at SDSU for over 125 years to cadets and non-cadets. Army and Air Force ROTC provides advanced military training and the foundational leadership education necessary for our citizens.
- The Military Academic Advancement Program (MAAP), an initiative of Great Plains Interactive Distance Education Alliance (GPIDEA), offers convenient anytime, anywhere online degrees and certificates. MAAP is part of a premier post-secondary distance education collaboration offering inter-institutional degree programs. SDSU is the only BOR School holding membership in GPIDEA and through MAAP provides education for careers that fit the professional development of military spouses, veterans, military service members, and civilian professionals serving the military community.
- Being military friendly is a priority. SDSU is ranked 11th among 100 college and universities recognized by *Military Times* in its Best for Vets: Colleges 2015 rankings. SDSU has taken the steps to support our military affiliated students by adding recommendations to syllabus policy and by providing training for new faculty and staff. SDSU also offers webinars focused on Veteran Friendly Classroom through the Center for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning.
- SDSU Veterans Affairs Office houses a Licensed Professional Counselor/Qualified Mental Health Professional trained in best practices by the Department of Defense. Free specialized counseling support to treat PTSD and readjustment issues is available for veterans.

For more information go to: <http://www.sdstate.edu/admissions/financing/aid/veterans/index.cfm>.

# UPDATES FROM EDUCATION PARTNERS

## *University of South Dakota*

The University of South Dakota Student Veterans Resource Center (SVRC) provides a place on campus where current military members, veterans, military spouses and their dependents can access free tutoring, free printing, library services, VA reintegration support, computer use and peer mentoring. Other services offered include assistance with gaining access to benefits, scholarships, study space and an environment in which to share your military experience with other students on campus.

Military and veteran students can also receive a broad range of counseling, outreach and referral services from the Sioux Falls Vet Center at the SVRC one day a week. Individual, couple's and family counseling, support and educational groups, and referral to other resources are provided. There is no charge for the services provided from the Vet Centers.

Many military and veteran students voiced concerns with their transition from military life to academic life. The Buddy Program was created to facilitate this transition. Military and Veteran students have the opportunity to be paired with a USD student for one semester. Buddies know what it takes to be successful at USD. They each have been selected because of their active involvement on campus and are committed to going the extra mile to ensure a successful experience at USD.

The SVRC has also been busy rebranding and generating awareness this past year. A mission statement was created. Welcome packets with branded materials were distributed to new and returning military and veteran students. Signs, banners and other branding materials are now being used in on and off site events. The website was revamped and has become a one-stop-shop for everything related to military and veteran services. A newsletter will soon be available through the website to keep students up to date on USD happenings that apply to them. A tutor program for military and veteran students will be implemented by the end of October.

For more information go to: <http://www.usd.edu/registrar/veterans-services/index.cfm>.

Learning *to*  
Better Serve  
Those ★  
Who Have  
Served

# PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The Department's website (<http://www.vetaffairs.sd.gov>) is designed to offer veterans a centralized clearinghouse of valuable resources accessible from anywhere in the world. The Department has a mobile website, making it easier for veterans to access information from their smartphones or tablets.

Our website is designed to highlight the benefits and programs available to veterans and their families, as well as provide veterans with a list of experts ready to assist them in maneuvering through their benefits.

The Department continues to disseminate a weekly newsletter electronically to all within our veteran network as well as post it on our website. The newsletter and job postings can be found at: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/News%20Updates.aspx>.

We distribute a monthly column to the media on timely issues relating to veterans and the benefits and services available to enhance their lives.

The Department maintains a directory of all veterans memorials throughout the state. The directory can be found on our webpage at: (<http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/resources/Veterans%20Memorials.pdf>).

The Department continues to serve as the caretakers of the Fallen Heroes Banners. When not on display, the banners are housed at SDDVA in Pierre. Groups interested in securing the banners work with the Department staff to schedule them. The schedule for the banners can be found at: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/resources/fallen%20heroes%20banners.aspx>.

The Department maintains a master calendar of events throughout the state relating to veterans. This list can be found at: <http://vetaffairs.sd.gov/publicaffairs/upcomingevents.aspx>.



# STATE VETERANS HOME

Located in the beautiful serene Black Hills, the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home (State Veterans Home) provides comprehensive, high quality health care services on a cost-effective basis to eligible South Dakota veterans in domiciliary home care and long term skilled nursing care, including a dementia care unit.

The mission of the State Veterans Home is to provide a quality living environment, along with quality medical support, in an independent living and long-term care setting for eligible South Dakota Veterans and their spouses, widows, or widowers; and, to provide administration, maintenance, management, medical care, and other services necessary to meet or exceed state and federal requirements.

## *Admission Procedures*

The criteria to reside at the Veterans Home has not changed since 1889, but over the years the documents required and forms used to apply for residency have changed. We continually look for ways to simplify and streamline this process. The admission team is constantly working on making sure the beds are full, and everything is done to make sure veterans and/or their spouses are admitted in a timely fashion.

## *Census*

Our census has increased and continues to improve. Arrangements are being made to house residents in Building Two, as well as a place for Building One and Two residents to enjoy meals. As always, we have a wait list for Nursing Care Unit and the Special Care Unit.

## *Medicaid - a Success*

Our Medicaid submissions have been running smoothly. Staff have worked endlessly to learn and assimilate into the Medicaid world. 42 applications have been submitted to the Department of Social Services for review and approval. Of those being submitted 36 were approved. We have 52 nursing care beds at the Veterans Home, and on average the monthly Medicaid residents have been increasing from six in 2011, to 14 in 2012, 21 in 2013 and 21 in 2014. These new Medicaid beds have a different "revenue" attached to them. This new funding source has significantly improved the bottom line at the Veterans Home. In the last year the Veterans Home averaged \$51,000 per month, totaling \$615,000.

## *Activities*

Activities directors planned and coordinated many events in 2014. The activity buses and pontoons were utilized a lot. Trips were made to Deadwood and Prairie Wind Casinos, Mount Rushmore, Bear Country, stock car races, Rush hockey games, magic shows in Custer, Black Hills Playhouse and shopping and dining trips to Rapid City and Chadron NE. For the residents that like outdoor activities there was trap shooting, fishing, pontoon boat rides, a pheasant hunt in Gettysburg, and horseback riding. There were a tremendous amount of events put on at the State Veterans Home by various veterans organizations, fraternal organizations, and civic groups. The Veterans Home hosted the community Easter Egg Hunt, Memorial Day Program, and Christmas Parade of Lights. The goal of the Activities Department is to maintain the resident's quality of life they enjoyed prior to joining the Veterans Home community.



# STATE VETERANS HOME

## *Staffing*

We have increased our focus and attention on finding qualified applicants for our direct care positions. We have an in-house incentive plan in place that allows for referral bonuses of \$250; sign on bonuses of \$250, as well as moving expense allowances for professional level applicants. Furthermore, the Department of Health sponsored Rural Healthcare Facility Recruitment Assistant program allows up to a \$10,000 bonus for qualified healthcare employees who commit to employment at the Veterans Home for a period of three years.

## *Contracts*

Overall the Veterans Home has 26 contracts, agreements and memorandums of understanding with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), individuals, state and local agencies. We contract out our special services that are provided to all our residents: occupational therapy, speech therapy and physical therapy. In addition, we have backup and relief services for our chaplain, pharmacist and physical therapist. The VA mandates that the State Veterans Home have social work oversight with a master's degree and mental health services which are contracted with the VA. The State Veterans Home entered into a separate business contract with the VA for primary care, mental health, social work oversight, and compensated work therapy. A memorandum of understanding has been established with Hospice of the Hills for applicable cases, and Fall River Hospital has demonstrated their support for our residents with transfers, x-rays and laboratory work. This year all the state food service contracts expired and new bids by various contractors were submitted through an RFP process. A'viands was the company selected as the new food service provider for the State Veterans Home. We have begun the process of reworking the food service contract with A'viands to accommodate feeding residents in buildings one and two; along with the new meal provision method for residents in the "neighborhoods" in the new building. The feeding issues will continue to be refined in the upcoming months resulting in an addendum to our contract. We have also begun looking at other contracts that will be needed prior to moving into the new home.

## *Training*

All current State Veterans Home FTEs have been briefed on the conversion process from their current jobs to the new "homemaker" positions. We have undergone a huge educational push for 2014. At this time, staff has been educated on Culture Change, Hand in Hand (CMS approved Dementia training), Dining assistance and Safe Food Handler's training. Special guest speakers have presented workshops on Dementia and Wound Care.



# STATE VETERANS HOME

## *New State Veterans Home*

It is finally here! The veterans of South Dakota will have a new Veterans Home! Staff has been diligently working and crunching numbers, working with contractors and the State Office of Engineering, relocating structures, relocating utility infrastructure and updating infrastructure. Construction is progressing on schedule and the building is up with a majority of the exterior work done. The finish work on the interior is in full swing and will continue through winter. The entire building should be done by October, which will begin the flush out period with a projected move in date of February 2016. The new Biomass heating plant construction is progressing quickly. The boiler is on site and the building is being erected at a fast pace. The new heating plant will burn wood chips rather than fossil fuels effectively cutting fuel costs. This type of heating is currently being used by our neighbors at Star Academy in Custer, and Chadron State College in Chadron, NE.

We have formed a multi department committee and started the process of planning the move to the new building. This covers all aspects such as manpower, equipment, food, families, timelines and many other logistic needs.

We encourage you to view the construction as it progresses via our webcam: <http://www.truelook.com/clients/scullconstruction-webcam3/>



# VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

The South Dakota Veterans Service Officers Association (SDVSOA) is an organization consisting of County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers, Assistants, South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs (SDDVA) employees and Veterans Service Organization Service Officers from across the State.

The primary purpose of the SDVSOA is to promote and further the work of all County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers in the State of South Dakota and to ensure that all of the State's veterans and/or their dependents are reached and receive the care and benefits to which they are entitled.

The SDVSOA with the cooperation of the SDDVA hosted the National Association of County Veterans Service Office trainers in 2014 to allow our SDVSOA members the opportunity to receive national accreditation with other veterans organizations.

The current board members of the SDVSOA are:

President Gordon Richard (Spink County)

Secretary/Treasurer Roy Farabee (Charles Mix and Gregory Counties)

Vice-president Robert Dunsmore (Dewey County and Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe)

District 1 Representative Mike Wiley (Day County)

District 2 Representative Ron Hoffer (Edmunds County)

District 3 Representative Terry Cousins (Todd and Tripp Counties)

District 4 Representative Angella Sutton (Meade County)

District 5 Representative Geri Opsal (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate)

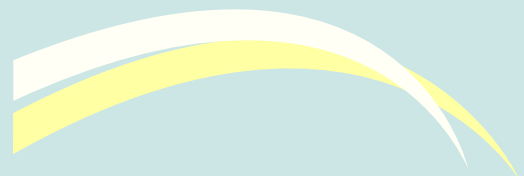
## COUNTY AND TRIBAL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

The Department maintains a statewide partnership with counties and tribes. They serve as the store front for the Department and have the local contact with veterans and their families.

Today it is an effective network of 62 trained VSOs. The VSOs ensure veterans have access to the benefits they have earned. VSOs are not supervised by the Department however, the Department provides training, certification, accreditation, counseling and outreach to the VSOs.

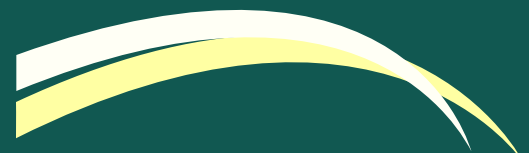
The vast majority of the VSO appeal cases are handled by our Department staff.

The Department holds initial onsite training for all new VSOs, as well as annual conferences and two mini-conferences a year.



# COUNTY AND TRIBAL VETERANS SERVICE OFFICERS

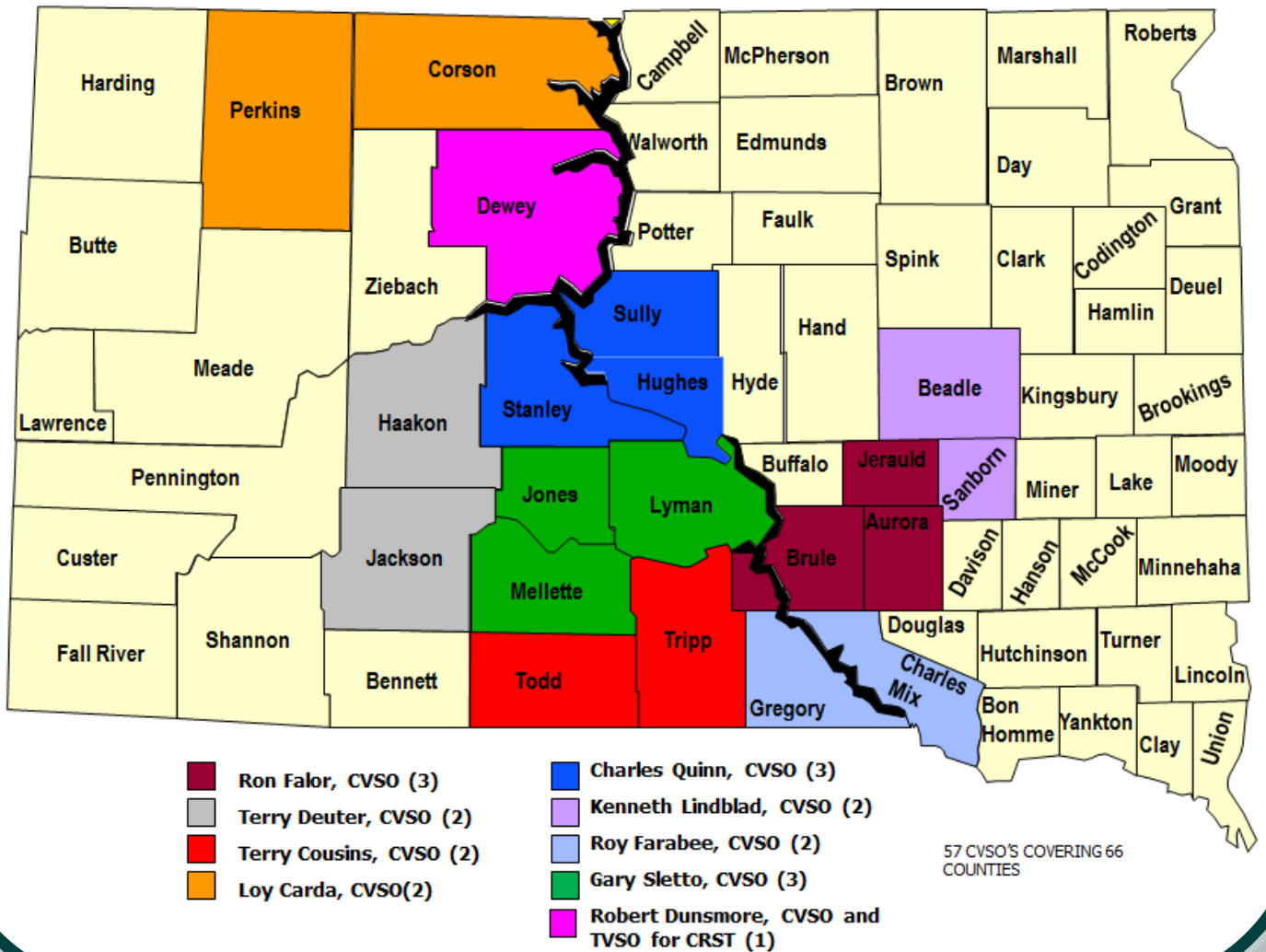
County/Tribe	Service Officer	County/ Tribe	Service Officer	County/Tribe	Service Officer
Aurora	Ron Falor	Grant	Scott Malimanek	Pennington	Neal Lutke
Beadle	Kenneth Lindblad	Gregory	Roy Farabee	Perkins	Loyson Carda
Bennett	Don Larson	Haakon	Terry Deuter	Potter	Harlan Shaw
Bon Homme	Richard Beringer	Hamlin	David Schaefer	Roberts	Larry Goette
Brookings	Mike Holzhauser	Hand	Dave Johnson	Sanborn	Kenneth Lindblad
Brown	Aaron Walberg	Hanson	Harry Huffman	Rosebud Sioux Tribe	Orlando Morrison
Brule	Ron Falor	Harding	Milton Douglas	Shannon	Denver American Horse
Buffalo	Nancy Falor	Hughes	Charles Quinn	Sisseton Wahpe- ton Oyate	Geri Opsal
Butte	Robert Wagner	Hutchinson	Glenn Hartman	Spink	Gordon Richard
Campbell	Lester Goehring	Hyde	Bob Sheffield	Stanley	Charles Quinn
Charles Mix	Roy Farabee	Jackson	Terry Deuter	Standing Rock Sioux Tribe	Manajah Hill
Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe	Robert Dunsmore	Jerauld	Ron Falor	Sully	Charles Quinn
Clark	Larry Jones	Jones	Gary Sletto	Todd	Terry Cousins
Clay	Cindy Aden	Kingsbury	Gary Schumacher	Tripp	Terry Cousins
Codington	Alvin Janzen	Lake	Douglas Huntrods	Turner	Thomas Sparrow
Corson	Loyson Carda	Lawrence	Bill Locken	Union	Daniel Veatch
Crow Creek Sioux Tribe	Nancy Falor	Lincoln	Dick Lien	Walworth	Leo Rookey
Custer	Kenneth Irwin	Lyman	Gary Sletto	Yankton	Michael McDonald
Davison	Jessica Davidson	Marshall	David Daberkow	Yankton Sioux Tribe	Dennis Rucker
Day	Mike Wiley	McCook	Keith Aden	Ziebach	Harold Veit
Deuel	Dennis Evenson	McPherson	Harvey Schaible		
Dewey	Robert Dunsmore	McPherson	Darrell Pfeifle		
Douglas	Fred Kuil	Meade	Angela Sutton		
Edmunds	Ron Hoffer	Mellette	Gary Sletto		
Fall River	Dan Cullen	Miner	Terrance Lee		
Faulk	Wayne Vetter	Minnehaha	Patricia Kroupa		
		Moody	Jim DeLay		
		Oglala Sioux Tribe	Frank Marshall		





# COUNTY VETERANS SERVICE OFFICER PARTNERSHIPS

2014 County VSO Partnerships



Twenty counties have formed partnerships and share veterans service officers. In some cases, the VSO works out of a central office and in other instances the VSO has an office in each of the respective counties.

Partnerships have provided opportunities for cost-sharing and in less populated counties with condensed veteran population, this format has served the veterans and the counties well.

# SERVICE ORGANIZATION PARTNERS

## *American Legion of South Dakota*

The American Legion Department of South Dakota has begun planning for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The American Legion. The American Legion was founded in 1919 by a group of World War I veterans to assist returning veterans with their needs. This group was led by Theodore Roosevelt Jr. also referred to as “Father of The American Legion.” The American Legion was founded in 1919 on 4 basic principles; Strong National Defense, Veterans Rehabilitation, Americanism, and Children & Youth. These same principles are as strong today as they were in 1919. The Department of South Dakota has set up three committees in preparation for the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. These committees are the Five-Year Membership Council, Public Relations Committee, and the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee. These committees are working hand in hand in preparation of the anniversary. The membership council has a goal of achieving the Department’s all time high in membership by the anniversary. The Public Relations’ goal is to bring brand awareness to The American Legion, and the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Committee is to plan events and obtain the histories of all The American Legion Posts in celebrating the anniversary.

The American Legion of South Dakota is made up of 244 Posts with approximately 22,000 Legionnaires. These Posts are located in cities and towns all across South Dakota and assist local communities in many patriotic and community events. Sons of the American Legion Detachments are increasing and were recognized by the National Organization for their membership and support to the Child Welfare Foundation. The American Legion Auxiliary is 14,000 members strong and work side by side The American Legion in taking care of the veterans and their families. The American Legion Riders increase in membership every year and represent The American Legion with dignity and honor at funerals and community events. This year across the country the American Legion Riders raised \$1 million dollars for the National Legacy Scholarship Fund. This fund is set up to put children of veterans who were killed in action, through college.

The American Legion has stood beside the veterans of Hot Springs and the surrounding areas in fighting to keep the VA Medical Center in Hot Springs open. In March at our National Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. they urged the SD congressional delegation to call for a congressional hearing in Hot Springs. When no response was heard by our State Convention in June, a resolution was passed urging the congressional delegation to call for a congressional hearing in Hot Springs to find out the facts involved with the proposed closing. The American Legion handed the resolution to Congresswoman Noem and Senator Thune during the convention and mailed the resolution to Senator Johnson. Two days following the convention, State Headquarters received a copy of the letter from Congresswoman Noem to Jeff Miller, Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee requesting a congressional hearing in Hot Springs. The AL thanks Congresswoman Noem for listening to them and the veterans of South Dakota. State American Legion Commander Tim Jurgens testified to the House Veterans Affairs Committee in support of keeping the Hot Springs VA Medical Center open.

The American Legion continues some of the best programs for youth in South Dakota; Boys State, High School Oratorical Contest, American Legion Baseball, Eagle Scout of the Year, Youth Trooper Academy, Youth Shooting Sports, to name a few. Many of these programs are life changing for the youth. Posts members across the State are in the schools teaching the kids on flag etiquette and promoting Americanism.

The American Legion, in support of their HEROES, have troop support programs such as: Operation Comfort Warrior, Veterans of Valor, Soldiers Wish, Heroes to Hometown, Wounded Warrior, Ride to Recovery, Family Support Network and many others.

The American Legion works closely with Secretary Zimmerman and his Department on all matters involving veterans care and benefits. The American Legion is very proud of Secretary Zimmerman and the work his personnel are doing in support of our veterans. The Secretary’s “Reaching All Veterans” Program is fantastic and is bringing deserved benefits to many veterans.

### *28TH Bomb Wing Retiree Activity Office (RAO)*

The 28TH Bomb Wing Retiree Activity Office (RAO), staffed with three volunteers, worked over 617 hours in 2014. RAO publishes an annual newsletter. EAFB's annual Retiree Appreciation Day (RAD) was held on Sept. 5, 2014. Retiree Activity Council monthly meetings and working lunch meeting are held at the Dakota's Club. Retiree updates are sent periodically. This office serves over five thousand retirees and spouses. The RAO has a library at EAFB that includes information on VA benefits. This office establishes a great link between the retirees in this area and the 28th Bomb Wing Commander.

### *National Guard Association of South Dakota*

The National Guard Association of South Dakota (NGASD) enjoyed its 15th consecutive year as a 100% membership state as well as having the highest membership percentage nationwide for the fourth year in a row. NGASD works hard to ensure the National Guard receives the best and latest equipment, maintain readiness through comprehensive personnel initiatives, and receive proper missions. We fight for equitable retirement programs in order to give Guard men and women the life-long support they've earned.

NGASD held its 61st annual conference in Watertown this past spring with 171 members in attendance. This conference affords its members the opportunity to collaborate on both local and national issues that affect the South Dakota National Guard. In addition to the state conference, thirty-eight delegates and guests attended the 136<sup>th</sup> National Conference & Exhibition in Chicago in August. There, South Dakota received three national level awards. The 153d Engineer Battalion received the Major General Milton A. Reckord Trophy which is awarded to the outstanding battalion in each of the Army areas determined to have the highest level of training and readiness. The 114<sup>th</sup> Fighter Wing received the Spaatz trophy which is awarded to the most outstanding flying unit in the Air National Guard each year. This is the fourth time the 114th Fighter Wing has won the prestigious award; the last time was in 1988. The Eagle Rising Award for Warrant Officers was awarded to CW3 Brett Anderson for outstanding achievements and service by a National Guard Warrant Officer.

NGASD gave back to the local community by making two charitable donations in 2014. One was to the South Dakota National Guard Museum for \$1,000 and another to the VA Hospice in Sioux Falls and Ft. Meade for \$1,000.

### *Paralyzed Veterans of America*

Paralyzed Veterans of America is the only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated solely for the benefit and representation of veterans with spinal cord injury or disease. For nearly 70 years, they have ensured that veterans have received the benefits earned through their service to our nation; monitored their care in VA spinal cord injury units; and funded research and education in the search for a cure and improved care for individuals with paralysis. As a partner for life, PVA also develops training and career services, works to ensure accessibility in public buildings and spaces, provides health and rehabilitation opportunities through sports and recreation, and advocates for veterans and people with disabilities. The PVA North Central Chapter was established July 26, 1964 in Sioux Falls and serves South Dakota, North Dakota, Southwest Minnesota, and portions of Montana and Wyoming.

The PVA Central Chapter celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Events held during the April PVA Awareness Month included hosting the Veterans Fun Bowl, participating in the veteran's pizza party at the Sioux Falls VA, and receiving Executive Proclamations from Governor Dugaard, Mayor Huether, and Mayor Kooiker.

Sports and Recreation activities this year included the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual PVA walleye fishing event, SD, trap shoot, pheasant hunts, deer hunts, and elk hunts.

Advocacy activities this year included the Legislative Advocacy Seminar in Washington, DC, visits with Congress, meeting with local communities on accessibility designs for new construction, public transportation, housing and disability awareness enforcement. The North Central Chapter is a proud member of the South Dakota Veterans Council.

## *Department of South Dakota VFW*

The Memorial Day Service at the National Cemetery in Sturgis was conducted by the Department of South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and State Commander Darold D. Couch was the master of ceremonies. The guest speaker was South Dakota Secretary of Veterans Affairs Larry Zimmerman.

South Dakota VFW Baseball continued with another successful year with over 240 teams registered and ending with the crowning of 16 state champions. National President Ann Panteleakos attended the Varsity A Championship game and threw out the first pitch.

The Veterans building at the South Dakota State Fair was manned by VFW Posts and Auxiliaries from throughout the state. The Department donated \$350 to the State Fair golf cart project which was again a great success. The carts furnish rides to veterans and anyone that attended the fair.

The Department Commander and Auxiliary President took part in parades in Yankton, Brandon, Watertown, Wagner, Centerville, and Brookings.

The Department of South Dakota attended the welcome home ceremony held in Sioux Falls for the South Dakota Army National Guard 1742 Transportation Company. Department Commander Donald A. Dahlin attended two community welcome home ceremonies.

The Department attended many administration meetings at the Sioux Falls, Hot Springs, and Fort Meade VA Facilities concerning issues that affect the care of veterans who use those VA Hospitals.

Sioux Falls VFW 628 Post helped sponsor the South Dakota Department of Labor Job Fair held at Augustana College in Sioux Falls with many members attending. There were over 80 employers in attendance.

The Department provided long sleeve t-shirts and gloves for homeless veterans stand-downs held in Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Aberdeen.

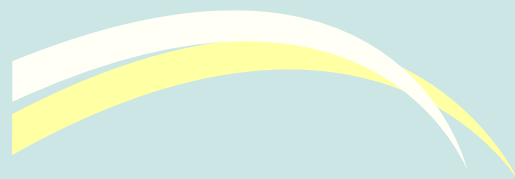
The Department holds an annual Buffalo Feed at the VA Hospitals in Hot Springs, Fort Meade and Sioux Falls. They also sponsor an oyster stew dinner at the State Veterans Home on Christmas Eve each year.

The Department of South Dakota VFW being a member of the Veterans Council, participated in the yearly Legislative Roundtable Programs.

The VFW Department of South Dakota participated in the Wreaths Across America Program this year. There are a total of seven cemeteries across South Dakota that these services were held at.

In November, the South Dakota Veterans of Foreign Wars held its 10th annual Disabled Veterans Pheasant Hunt in Faulkton. This was the dream of the founder and organizer Pat McGrath of the Faulkton VFW Post. This year the Department recognized the Potter County John Deere Dealership in Gettysburg for furnishing John Deere Gators so the disabled veterans could move around in the fields during the hunt. Also the Department recognized the Faulk County Record newspaper for its coverage of the Disabled Pheasant Hunt the last ten years.

The VFW continues to recognize the writing skills of middle school aged children with Patriot's Pen Essay Contest, high school students writing and speaking skills with the Voice of Democracy Contest, the dedication of school teachers with Teacher of the Year and honor Law Enforcement Officer, EMT and Firefighter of the Year awards.



### *14th Flight, Order of Daedalians*

The Order of Daedalians was established in March 1934 as a Fraternity of Military Pilots of heavier than air-powered aircraft. They accept men and women from all services to include the National Guard and Reserve Units. There are 71 Flights throughout the United States. They are proud sponsors of both Flight and Academic scholarships for those youth interested in serving our nation through airpower, no matter what service.

This past year the Flight sponsored two high school JR ROTC Awards. Locally, Cadet Sam E. Sorrell was presented the Daedalian Award at Douglas High School in Box Elder. Cadet Lt. (jg) Daniel Roeun was other awardee, from St. Paul, MN.

Additionally, they strongly support the Air and Space Museum at Ellsworth Air Force Base, financially and they have Daedalian members as volunteers on their board.

The South Dakota Civil Air Patrol is supported by the 14th Flight as they have members who are officers in their program and fly search and rescue missions for the CAP. 14th Flight also supports the CAP Cadet Program with financial assistance. Currently one of the Daedalians is the CAP Cadet Advisor.

### *Vietnam Veterans of America*

The Vietnam Veterans of America founding principle is “Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another.” Carrying out this mission the VVA fosters, encourages, promotes, and supports issues and benefits important to veterans.

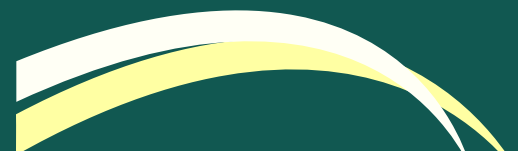
They have a presence at all parades, community events, Memorial Day programs, Veterans Day programs, Flag Day, Vietnam Veterans Day and many more events. Taking Care of their own, the VVA coordinated the Vietnam Veterans Era Reunion and Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day events and programs. The VVA shares their values by supporting your military leaders with scholarships.

The VVA takes great honor in serving as Honor Guard for their fallen brothers and sisters.

### *Disabled American Veterans*

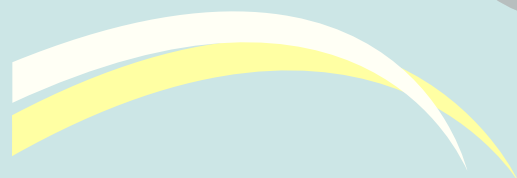
The DAV is dedicated to empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. They accomplish this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America’s injured heroes; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life.

DAV members participate in programs on Armed Forces Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Veterans Day and Flag Day. They have presence in numerous parades, at legislative roundtables and cracker barrels, at Stand Downs and job fairs. They host appreciation and volunteer luncheons, veterans and military appreciation banquets, poker runs and POW/MIA events.



## *Other South Dakota Service Organizations*

Air Force Sergeants Association  
American Legion Auxiliary  
Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary  
Korean War Veterans Association  
Marine Corps League  
Military Officers Association of America  
Military Order of the Purple Heart  
National American Indian Veterans Inc.  
South Dakota National Guard Enlisted Association  
South Dakota National Guard Enlisted Association Auxiliary  
South Dakota National Guard Officers Association  
The Retired Enlisted Association  
U.S. Submarine Veterans Inc.  
Veterans of Foreign Wars Auxiliary  
SD State Council of Vietnam Veterans of America  
World War I Auxiliary



# VETERANS COMMISSION AND COUNCIL

## *South Dakota Veterans Commission*

The South Dakota Veterans Commission, consists of six members appointed by the Governor. Members of the commission shall be citizens of the United States and of South Dakota, and shall be veterans who have been discharged from the armed forces honorably or under honorable conditions. Annual appointments shall be made for terms of six years.

Commissioners have the responsibility of communicating the Governor's veteran-related public policy positions to the veterans of South Dakota and returning to the Governor those concerns and viewpoints of the veteran constituency

2014-2015 members of the Veterans Commission:

- Mike Birnbaum, Rapid City (Chairman)
- James Ross, Whitewood (Vice Chairman)
- John Noyes, Pierre
- Helen Parr, Sioux Falls
- Daryl (KC) Russell, Aberdeen
- Lori Vosika, Hot Springs



## *South Dakota Veterans Council*

The purpose and objectives of the South Dakota Veterans Council are to develop a statewide, intelligent, aggressive and serviceable Council for the purpose of promoting all activities found to be for the good of all veterans and their dependents and to provide a practical means by which veterans service organizations throughout the state can effectively contribute to the betterment of all veterans.

The South Dakota Veterans Council is comprised of congressionally chartered veterans' service organizations which include: American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, Military Order of the Purple Heart, North Central Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and Vietnam Veterans of America. Membership consists of three members from each veterans service organization.



# SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

The Department continues to advocate and commendably serve South Dakota's veterans in line with its goals and mission.

Witnessing the passion and commitment of our staff renews my spirit. Their willingness to serve and assist our veterans speaks to their allegiance.

These qualities and attributes will serve the Department and South Dakota's veterans.



(500 copies were printed at the cost of \$6 each on 01/27/15)

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