2015 Annual Report

of the

Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

STATE OF COLORADO

COLORADO BOARD OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Members
Dana Niemela, Chair - Golden
Duane Dailey, Vice Chair – Hot Sulphur Springs
Rene Simard, Secretary – Highlands Ranch
William "Robby" Robinson – Castle Pines
Chris Holden – Colorado Springs
Jack Rudder – Homelake
Hollie Caldwell - Parker

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FAX: 303-284-3163
Reuben Mestas
Director

John W. Hickenlooper
Governor

Major General
H. Michael Edwards
The Adjutant General

December 31, 2015

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
Governor, State of Colorado
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Senator Ray Scott
State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee
Colorado Senate
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Representative Su Ryden
State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee
Colorado House of Representatives
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Subject: 2015 Annual Report of the Board of Veterans Affairs

In accordance with the Colorado Revised Statutes, I am pleased to provide you the 2015 Report of the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA). This report covers the period of December 1, 2014 through December 1, 2015.

The CBVA is comprised of seven members, all honorably discharged veterans of military service who serve four-year terms on the Board. Jack Rudder and Hollie Caldwell were appointed in 2015 to replace retiring Wendy Chiado and Kathleen Dunemn. Jack Rudder is an Air Force veteran and the Rio Grand County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO). Hollie Caldwell is an Air Force veteran and the Dean of Nursing at Platte College. Other members of the Board are newly elected officers Chairman, Dana Niemela, Vice Chairman Duane Dailey, Secretary Rene Simard, and William "Robby" Robinson and Chris Holden. During the reporting period the Board met twelve times to address issues and to plan programs of service to Colorado Veterans. They also participated in numerous veterans' events such as veterans homeless stand downs in Denver and Colorado Springs, the Aurora Veterans Salute, and toured all of the State Veteran Community Living Centers, as well as expanded outreach to rural areas.

One of the most significant issues facing Colorado Veterans remains the slow processing of claims and appeals by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). While the wait time from claim submission to adjudication has decreased an average of 90 days for those veterans who submit fully developed claims, too many are waiting an average for 4-5 months for a decision. If the veteran is denied and must appeal the VA's decision, the wait time extends beyond an additional 18 months. This problem will persist as the population of veterans continues to evolve both in numbers and in complexity of disabilities. This challenge creates problems for the State in meeting the medical and financial needs of veterans awaiting their benefits, and it clear that this is a systemic issue and one that the Board and Colorado cannot solve. In the meantime, communities will need backing from you to continue to provide the necessary grass roots support to ensure the financial stability and overall wellness of the veterans in our communities.

Another significant issue that has been identified is a lack of access to primary and mental health care in rural areas. The VA provides quality mental health services, particularly for combat-related issues; however, this care is provided mainly at major health care facilities like Denver and Grand Junction. Access to it is a challenge for a variety of reasons. In the past year, VA implemented the "Veterans Choice Card," expanding access to local providers in lieu of traveling significant distances or waiting several weeks or months for an appointment. We continue to monitor progress with the Choice Program to ensure our rural veterans are being adequately served, but VA officials have expressed that rural service providers are not enrolling in the program to become authorized to provide services locally. VA continues to expand outreach to providers, but local official support may further influence service providers to engage and assist in providing these vital services.

The claims process for a veteran most frequently begins with the County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO). We are very pleased that the approved Department's budget request this year included funding the positions at $8.00 per hour. This measure, implemented 1 July 2015, has helped Colorado Counties add both part- and full-time staff to support the claims process. We would like to thank you for supporting the increase in spending that has already greatly enhanced the claims and benefits process for Colorado veterans. In addition, over time it will prove to provide an economic boost to counties by increasing VA dollars that come into the County through veterans pensions and reduced demand on county services.

Colorado has made great strides in providing long term solutions for veteran homelessness. Support from federal programs has helped to significantly reduce homelessness across the State, but the problem is far from solved. Communities across Colorado express concern over high housing costs. This is impacting every generation of veteran, including World War II veterans and those with families. The high cost of living has priced older veterans on fixed-incomes out of housing and has made housing unaffordable for countless lower-income veterans, especially those with families. The Veterans Trust Fund and the Veterans Assistance Grant funds can supplement federal aid to those in a housing crisis, but it is not a long-term solution. We urge our leadership to pursue additional affordable housing solutions so Colorado can become another one of the first States to permanently end veteran homelessness.

The Veterans Trust Fund and the Veterans Assistance Grant provide grant funds to help veterans organizations, government agencies and non-profits provide needed services throughout Colorado. Last FY $836,000 was made available through the Veterans Trust Fund to veterans service organizations to provide medical transportation assistance, emergency financial assistance and medical assistance. The Veterans Assistance Grant awarded $970,000, mostly for veterans' homeless prevention and treatment programs and mental health. While these funds have helped, it is worth noting that the requests for these emergency funds are more than double the amount available, and there are many communities struggling to meet the needs. The breakdown of the grant funding provided is at attachments 1 and 2.

Colorado continues to grow in its service to veterans, and the efforts that have been made within our communities and our Department to connect veterans to VA care, community-based organizations and essential services are nothing short of exceptional. The State's continued commitment to funding the mandate for our County Service Offices, along with the support or our County Commissioners, will only improve outcomes for the veterans in our communities. Connecting veterans to Federal benefits, health care, housing and employment opportunities has already proved to reduce unemployment and homelessness and ultimately will strengthen all of our communities.

Sincerely,

Dana L. Niemela, Chairman
Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

2015 Report of the Board of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Trust Fund

The Veterans Trust Fund originates from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement and it disbursed $710,280.94 in FY 2014-2015. Funds may be used for State Veterans Community Living Centers, the State Veterans Cemetery, the Division of Veterans Affairs and non-profit veterans' service organizations recognized by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as an organization that can provide services to veterans under Title 38, USC, such as the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans and Veterans of Foreign Wars. The grant funds are primarily used to provide veterans with emergency assistance, transportation for medical services and homeless prevention. Over twelve thousand veterans benefitted from grants awarded to non-profit veterans' service organizations during the fiscal year. The detailed Veterans Trust Fund Annual Report for FY 2014-2015 is attached to this document (Attachment #1).

Veterans Assistance Grant

The State General Assembly, through appropriations, authorized the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) Veterans Assistance Grant to receive $1,000,000 from the general fund for FY 2014-2015. Of these funds, a total of $970,000 was designated to be granted to non-profit or governmental agencies to provide assistance to veterans in the State. The following is a final report of the administration of those monies. The detailed Veterans Assistance Grant Report for FY 2014-2015 is attached to this document (Attachment #2).

Division of Veterans Affairs

The Division of Veterans Affairs (DVA), with their Veterans Service Officers (VSOs), serves as the State "hub" for the network of County Veteran Service Officers. They review claims from the counties and forward them to the US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) for processing. Importantly, the State VSOs are also certified to represent veterans on claim appeals. They also provide initial direct claim service to many veterans from Denver County who walk in to the DVA offices. Importantly, the Division also provides annual training and certification to County Veterans Service Officers and service officers from veterans' organizations.

The detailed Division of Veterans Affairs Report for FY 2014-2015 is attached to this document (Attachment #3).

Veteran Service Officer Training

The Division of Veterans Affairs staff provided training to new County Service Officers and provided continuing education credit needs for their seasoned service officers.

The detailed Veteran Service Officer Training Report for FY 2014-2015 is attached to this document (Attachment #4).

Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado was built using federal and State funds in 2002. Over the years the Board has provided funds from the Veterans Trust primarily to add columbarium space and occasional emergency repairs.

The detailed Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado Report for FY 2014-2015 is attached to this document (Attachment #5).

Department of Local Affairs: Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption

Permanently and totally disabled veterans may apply for a property tax exemption for the first $200,000 of taxable value for their residence. They must apply through, and be approved by, the Division of Veterans Affairs for this exemption.

The detailed Department of Local Affairs Report for FY 2014-2015 is attached to this document (Attachment #6).

Department of Labor and Employment

The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment delivers an array of labor and employment services to Colorado veterans through the 59 State and county run One Stop Workforce Centers and satellite offices. Services provided include job matching and referral, vocational and career guidance, labor market information, and resume writing and job search workshops. Centers also refer eligible veterans to appropriate Workforce Investment Act training programs and referrals to skilled apprenticeship program.

The detailed Department of Labor and Employment Report for FY 2014-2015 is attached to this document (Attachment #7).

Department of Revenue

There are 29 different military and veterans license plates authorized in statute. Many, such as the Medal of Honor Recipient, Purple Heart and Disabled Veteran plates are free and exempt from annual vehicle fees while others, such as the U.S. Army, Navy or Air Force plates cost $50 and do not exempt the vehicle from fees. There are 128,591 vehicles registered with one of the military or veterans license plates.

The Department also provides several other services to members of the armed services. Deployed members may be exempt from motor vehicle registration fees and pay only $1.00 in specific ownership tax. The VETS-2-TRUCKS program allows service member with 2 years of heavy truck operator experience to qualify for a Commercial Drivers License without taking the skills test. Veterans and active duty service embers may also have a veteran or active military identifier placed on their State driver's license for free.

The detailed list of services provided by the Department of Revenue for FY 2014-2015 is attached to this document (Attachment #8).

Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Parks and Wildlife offers several benefits to Colorado veterans. Veterans with a disabled veteran license plate are granted free admission to State parks. Any active or retired military member receiving treatment at a military facility or convalescing can be given a free fishing license. A Purple Heart recipient or disabled veteran may also obtain a free lifetime combination small game hunting and fishing license. Wounded warriors and active duty military who are stationed in Colorado or residents of Colorado are also offered a range of several benefits and exceptions for big game hunting draw preferences.

The detailed Department of Natural Resources Report for FY 2014-2015 is attached to this document (Attachment #9).

Colorado Veterans Monument

C.R.S. 24-80-1401(2) requires that one member of the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs be a member of the Preservation Trust Committee for the Colorado Veterans Monument. The monument is located at Veterans Park to the west of the Colorado State Capitol. Board member Rene Simard holds the membership position.

Mr. Tim Drago of the Preservation Trust Committee continues to ensure that the monument and grounds are well maintained and reflect Colorado's pride in those men and women who have served our great nation and the State of Colorado.

Attachments:

1. Veterans Trust Fund Report
2. Veterans Assistance Grant Report
3. Division of Veterans Affairs Report
4. Veteran Service Officer Training Report
5. Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado Report
6. Department of Local Affairs Report
7. Department of Labor and Employment Report
8. Department of Revenue Report
9. Department of Natural Resources Report

STATE OF COLORADO

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DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS REPORT ON THE COLORADO STATE VETERANS AFFAIRS TRUST FUND FOR FY 14-15

Subject: Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund

Requirement: Pursuant to §25-1-108.5 (2), C.R.S. as amended, the following report is provided for State Fiscal Year 14-15 covering the period from July 1, 2014 - June 30, 2015.

Funds Received: The Veterans Trust Fund (VTF) received a Long Bill appropriation of $880,000 for FY 14-15. The Division of Veterans Affairs was authorized to expend $42,197 (5% of the funds) for administration of the grant; however the actual expenditures were $19,333 (2.7%) for administration. Each year, VTF grant applications exceed the annual appropriation provided to the trust fund. Of the $836,000 of trust fund monies provided for grants, $792,330.88 was awarded in grants, and $710,280.94 was expended. Additional funds would have been spent by grantees but for the delays caused by CORE.

Program Description (with eligible population): The Colorado State Veterans Trust Fund is designed with the overall goal of assisting all veterans in need of assistance residing in the State of Colorado regardless of race, color, national origin, religion, sexual orientation, marital or religious status. The key goals of the program are to provide sufficient support and funding to meet the needs of veterans in the four areas defined below:

- State Veteran's Nursing Homes for capital improvements or needed amenities for existing or future state veterans nursing homes.
- Operation and maintenance of existing or future State Veterans Cemeteries.
- Costs incurred by the Division of Veterans Affairs.
- Veterans programs operated by nonprofit veterans' organizations that meet criteria adopted by the board and that are selected by the Board as grant recipients.

Non-Profit Criteria:
Nonprofit veterans' organizations: Nonprofit veterans' organizations must be nationally recognized by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as an organization that can provide services to veterans under Title 38, USC. The organization must be designated by the IRS as a 501(c)19 or 501(c)23 organization.

Program Criteria: The Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (BVA) criteria for veterans programs operated by nonprofit veteran's organizations located within the State of Colorado are programs that provide assistance to the needs of veterans for their health and well- being. Examples of such programs are providing assistance to homeless or near homeless veterans, assistance to previously incarcerated veterans, homeless veteran's stand-downs, emergency assistance, veteran's transportation programs to medical centers and/or clinics, veteran's employment training programs and job related services.

Eligible Population: Veterans within the state of Colorado with an other than dishonorable discharge. There are no income eligibility requirements.

Services Provided: The following represents a breakdown by category of agencies that received funding, grants or awards during the reporting period, to include the type of service and/or assistance provided.

Non-Profit Veterans Service Organizations and **State Veterans Nursing Homes** – these organizations expended $710,280.94 in grant funds to support veterans and their needs.

- Homelake State Veterans Nursing Home (SVNH) expended $14,097 for wall mounted TV's in residents' rooms, Florence SNVH expended $15,710 for residential furniture, Walsenburg SVNH expended $14,212 for security cameras, and Rifle SVNH expended $13,975.94 for new electric beds and mattresses.
- Non-Profit Veterans Service Organizations expended the remaining amount of grant funds. The services provided included: transportation to medical appointments (not funded by the VA), emergency assistance and basic needs, homeless veteran assistance, and veteran stand downs.

During FY 2014-2015, the (duplicated) number of veterans served by grantees was: 12,049.

Program Effectiveness: Throughout FY2014-2015, the program focused on implementing changes to more effectively measure effectiveness and goal attainment. Previous data collection efforts have focused primarily on outputs including number of grants awarded and number of veterans assisted. While those are still considered to be critical measures, BVA and DVA are moving forward with outcome measurement as well. The goal will be to determine if the services provided lead to a decrease in need and an increase in health and well-being for veterans in the state. Additionally, BVA is looking to those measures to ensure that funding is directed toward the right programs to have the greatest impact and cost outcome benefit.

Evaluation of the Operation of the Program: The State Auditors reviewed the program operations during FY14-15. All of the recommendations have been implemented. Process improvements are on-going. As a result of the changes implemented, training webinars for grantees have been conducted and will continue to be held for training purposes, to build collaboration and cooperation within regions, and to seek input from grantees for further program enhancements.

Grantees: Please see the attached list for all grantees awarded Veterans Trust Fund monies.

In Closing: Over the past thirteen years the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs, through the Colorado Veterans Trust Fund, have provided direct benefits ranging from emergency assistance, work clothes, rent assistance, utility assistance and transportation to Veterans Affairs medical facilities to tens of thousands of veterans throughout the State.

FY2014-2015 Veterans Trust Fund Grantees

Grantee	Location	Purpose	Amount Awarded
American Legion Post 25	Florence	Vet Assistance	$15,000
American Legion Post 44	Steamboat Springs	Transport/Vet Assistance	$5,600
American Legion Post 115	Rye	Vet Assistance	$5,000
American Legion Post 66	Akron	Transportation	$3,500
VFW Post 3621	Lamar	Transport/Vet Assistance	$10,000
VFW Post 8661	Conifer	Transport/Vet Assistance	$7,200
American Legion Post 103	Littleton	Vet Assistance	$20,000
VFW Post 899	Alamosa	Transport/Vet Assistance	$25,000
American Legion Post 108	Pagosa Springs	Transport/Vet Assistance/Van	$50,000
VFW Post 7829	Monument	Stand Down/Vet Assistance	$15,000
VFW Post 5231	Mancos	Transport/Vet Assistance	$4,810
American Legion Post 113	Alamosa	Transportation	$2,000
American Legion Post 23	Aurora	Vet Assistance	$10,000
American Legion Post 2	Pueblo	Transport/Vet Assistance/Van	$42,000
VFW Post 1	Denver	Vet Assistance/Stand Down/Homeless Programs	$89,000
NABVETS Chapter 24	Aurora	Vet Assistance	$20,000
DAV Chapter 25	Grand Junction	Stand Down/Vet Assistance	$12,000
American Legion Post 32	Longmont	Transport/Vet Assistance/Stand Down	$20,000
VFW Post 41	Loveland	Veterans Assistance	$40,000
DAV Chapter 48	Durango	Transport/Vet Assist/Stand Down	$36,000
American Legion Post 88	Hot Sulphur Springs	Vet Assistance	$7,000
American Legion Post 109	Windsor	Vet Assistance/Stand Down	$40,000
American Legion Post 170	Westcliffe	Transport/Vet Assistance	$40,000

VFW Post 4265	Craig	Transport/Vet Assistance	$10,000
VFW Post 5843	Meeker	Transport/Vet Assistance	$6,000
AL Department of Colorado	Denver (statewide)	Vet Assistance	$20,000
DAV Chapter 44	Delores	Transport/Vet Assistance	$40,000
DAV Region	Denver	Stand Down	$18,000
VFW Department of Colorado	Lakewood	Vet Assistance	$40,000
VFW Post 4171	Golden	Vet Assistance	$20,000
American Legion Post 29	Aurora	Transport/Vet Assistance	$6,000
American Legion Post 22	Northglenn	Vet Assistance	$25,000
Vietnam Veterans of America Chap. 1071	Denver	Vet Assistance	$12,500
SVCLC Homelake	Monte Vista	Wall Mounted TVs	$14,097
SVCLC Bruce McCandless	Florence	Resident Furniture	$15,710
SVCLC Rifle	Rifle	Beds and Mattresses	$14,085.88
SVCLC Walsenburg	Walsenburg	Security Cameras	$16,828
Total			**$792,330.88**

STATE OF COLORADO

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Veterans Assistance Grant
2014-2015 Final Report

Pursuant to C.R.S. 28-5-712, Legislative appropriations authorized the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) Veterans Assistance Grant to receive $1,000,000 from the general fund for FY 2014-2015. Of these funds, a total of $970,000 was designated to be granted to non-profit or governmental agencies to provide assistance to veterans in the State. The following is a final report of the administration of those monies. The grant program received requests in the amount of $ 2,140,186.00. A total of 21 non-profit organizations and governmental entities throughout the state were awarded grants. The direct services provided through the grants include the provision of shelter, housing and emergency assistance to homeless veterans, employment assistance, transportation, legal assistance, mental health services and other forms of assistance to veterans throughout the state.

- A total of $590,596.82 was expended by the grantees.
- A total of 1510 veterans were served during the contract period.

The execution rate was impacted by several issues during the grant year. One grantee returned the funds as they found the requirements of the funds too challenging. One grantee's organization was put on hiatus for most of the grant period. Another grantee's contract was put on hold by the Department for issues of non-compliance. And finally, the statewide issues with the CORE implementation hindered grantees from receiving funds in a timely manner such that the delays caused services to be put on hold at several points throughout the fiscal year. Overall, the execution rate was 77% when removing the contract that was pulled by the Department, and 86% if accounting for the two additional grantees unable to perform on the contract.
(A full list of grant recipients, location and funding amount is attached.)

FY2014-2015 Veterans Assistance Grantees

Grantee	Location	Purpose	Amount Awarded
Alamosa County	Alamosa	Homeless Vet Assistance	$23,000
Park County Senior Coalition	Fairplay	Vet Assistance	$35,000
Pikes Peak Work Force Center	Colorado Springs	Employment/Vet Assistance	$20,000
CO Veterans Resource Coalition	Colorado Springs	Homeless Shelter	$152,000
Pueblo Veterans Council	Pueblo	Vet Assistance	$10,000
Providers' Resource Clearing House	Aurora	Furniture for Vets	$34,000
CNDC-Veterans Helping Veterans Now	Boulder	Mental Health	$50,000
Veterans for Veterans Archuleta County	Pagosa Springs	Homeless Vet Assistance	$25,000
American Military Family	Brighton	Mental Health/Vet Assistance	$30,000
Grand County	Hot Sulphur Springs	Transportation/Vet Assistance, Mental Health	$30,000
Second Chance Veterans Charity	Dacono	Disabled Vet Mobility	$50,000
Catholic Charities	Denver	Homeless Vet Program/Vehicle	$50,000
Bo Matthews Center for Excellence	Denver	Veterans Housing	$200,000
La Puente Home, Inc.	Alamosa	Vet Assistance	$10,000
A Strong Tower Ministry	Denver	Homeless Ex-Offenders	$50,000
Mountain Resource Center	Conifer	Vet Assistance/Mental Health	$35,000
Delores County	Delores	Transportation	$41,530
Chaffee County	Salida	Homeless Vet Assistance	$50,000

Home Front Cares	Colorado Springs	Veterans Assistance	$14,910
Project Sanctuary	Granby	Family Retreat	$45,000
Archuleta County	Pagosa Springs	Mental Health/Vet Assistance	$14,560
Total			**$970,000**

STATE OF COLORADO

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COLORADO DIVISION OF VETERAN AFFAIRS

2015 REPORT ON SERVICE TO VETERANS

October 31, 2015

For the Colorado Department of Military and Veteran Affairs
Annual Report to the Governor

Chairman Dana Niemela
Colorado Board of Veteran Affairs

Re: State Board of Veteran Affairs Annual Report to the Governor

Dear Ms. Niemela:

This year was marked by persistent outreach to Colorado Veterans with over 120 outreach events. State Veteran Service Officers monthly participated in and actively attended events including: Colorado's public and private nursing homes, homeless stand-downs, Transitional Assistance Program for veterans transitioning from active duty, Veterans Day events, county events, one-stop-shops, and many others. The need for highly trained State and County Service officers remains paramount as we see the ongoing need for assistance with veterans facing Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome, education/Post-911 GI-Bill, vocational rehabilitation, and claims processing.

Executive Summary: In 2015 Colorado Veterans continued to make a positive impact on their local economies as Colorado saw an over-all increase by $600 million and reached the $3.1 billion mark in total benefits. Of these $379 million went to education and vocational rehabilitation benefits. The Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs team assisted with the $1.5 billion in direct pay outs to veterans in the form of compensation and pension benefits. The Division of Veterans Affairs team features 18 full time employees, which includes staff at our Veteran Memorial Cemetery in Grand Junction, grant administrator and State Veteran Service Officers. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reported the Colorado Veteran population at 413,271, which is an increase from last year by 22,447. This increase indicates with the reduction in forces, Veterans are choosing Colorado as their home. We anticipate expenditures for VA healthcare to continue with the aging population of Vietnam Veterans, and with the care for our Veterans from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom.

Summary of Significant Activities and Accomplishments:
Unceasing outreach continued as a major mission for the Division: Our Service Officers actively participated in various programs mentioned above increasing visibility, phone calls, appointments, claims filed and overall division effectiveness.

Annual training Conference for County Veteran Service Officers (CVSO): This paramount week-long annual event enables the State VSOs to meet with and train the CVSOs in large and small groups as well as one-on-one. We use a variety of teaching methods and activities to facilitate learning and active participation.

Processing Veteran Benefits: Our team filed more than 5,000 additional claims this year than last and received more than 4,000 additional phone calls.

Summary of Program Assessment:

The following information is submitted for your consideration:

COLORADO DIVISION OF VETERAN AFFAIRS		
Date: 30OCT2015		
	OFFICE ACTIVITIES	
ITEM	2014	2015
New Power of Attorneys	6225	6162
Letters to VA	8857	6999
New Claims	10,511	15,536
Telephone Calls	25,271	29,483
Health Care Enrollment	1534	1502
Certified Appeals Sent to BVA	130	131
Referendum E Veteran Property Tax Exemption: Running Total	5691	6334

INTERMENTS IN VETERAN MEMORIAL CEMETERY OF WESTERN COLORADO	
Date 30JUNE2015	
Veteran	2322
Spouse	827
Dependent	8
TOTAL	3167

Short and Long term goals: This year the Division approved 643 Veterans Property Tax Exemption (REF E) applications. This number includes Veterans widows (HB 14-1373).

We continued to streamline our business model with the VA in the processing of compensation and pension claims. This is most evident in the decrease in count of Letters to VA by over 1,800. This is indicative of the

change in programs implemented by the VA in coordination with their State partners with the Fully Developed Claim (FDC) Program allowing veterans to provide all claim forms, supporting documents, and private medical evidence up front with the initial submission of the claim resulting in faster claims processing time. Our Division made every effort to adhere to this program and our data shows the program worked in minimizing the number of letters going back and forth between the VA and veterans during the evidence gathering phase of VA claims. The result was also a faster claim turn-around time in the FDC program by at least 90 days on average.

Challenges and Goals: By 2025 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs predicts veterans from Post 9-11 conflicts as the largest group, followed by our Vietnam Veterans and Korean War era Veterans. Currently our Vietnam Era veterans are the largest group. By 2040 the VA predicts we will see the largest population of female and minority veterans in U.S. history.

Our success is measured by the percent of veterans seeking us as their representative. The Post 9-11 generation of veterans choose to utilize online applications and social media to obtain veteran information. Thus, we continue to adapt to the latest technologies to reach veterans. Despite advances in technology, nothing replaces the sound advocacy our Division provides in assisting veterans in obtaining VA Benefits. The mediums may have changed, but the laws and requirements surrounding VA benefits have not.

As our Armed Forces participate in world-wide missions, our Nation's leaders will continue to call upon the myriad of units based in Colorado. As Colorado Veterans complete their tours of duty, we will provide unabated support serving them as they return home to a grateful community here in Colorado.

Administrative Condition: Our Division reported last year our use of the web based program, VETRASPEC, for claim management and claim filing for benefits with the Federal Department of Veteran Affairs. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is in the process of partnering with VETRASPEC programmers on an initiative called Digits-to-Digits, whereby claims entered in to the State's VETRASPEC system will automatically populate into the VA's programs for claims processing. This potentially provides the State with significant cost savings in terms of paper expense. With the assistance of my staff, Colorado Counties were able to service 15,536 new entitlement claims in VETRASPEC over the last year.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Diane Ricci, my Deputy Director at 303-284-6077. Also, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the Division's recommendations and this annual report.

Sincerely,

Ben Mestas, Director
Colorado Division of Veteran Affairs

STATE OF COLORADO

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SUBJECT: Governors Report of the 2015 Colorado Veterans Service Officers (CVSO) Training

The 2015 Annual CVSO Training Conference was held in Colorado Springs at the Colorado Springs Marriott Hotel from Tuesday, April 28 through Friday, May 1, 2015. The four day event was filled with information and training for new VSO's (Building Block class) and veteran VSO's (Continuing Education Class). The entire Colorado Department of Veterans Affairs staff contributed to the training sessions, as well as representatives from the Division of Military and Veteran Affairs, the Federal VA benefits section, Denver VA hospital, Transition Assistance Advisors, Freedom Service Dogs, Rock Mountain Human Services, and Volunteers of America. Topics covered included CDVA Admin., Vetra Spec, presumptive and secondary issues, compensation claims, fully developed claims, claim development, pensions, claims for increase and TDIU, VA math, homelessness, Colorado state programs, women veterans, discharge upgrades hearing loss and incarcerated vets, pension, aid and attendance, ethics, burial death benefits, DIC, reserve and guard issues, appeals at DRO and BVA levels, Veterans Assistance Grant, Veterans Trust Fund Grant, Vocational Rehab, and Colorado State Nursing Homes/Community Living Centers. The CVSOs held their annual meeting and elected a new slate of officers. County Veteran Service Officers attended in addition to attendees from VFW, NABVETS, American Legion, Blue Water Navy Association. Outside contributors shared their expertise and knowledge to help the entire conference focus on the mission of better serving our nation's heroes.

STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado

Status Report
Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado
November 1, 2014 through October 28, 2015
to the
Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

October 28, 2015

VETERANS MEMORIAL CEMETERY OF WESTERN COLORADO
2830 Riverside Parkway
Grand Junction, Colorado 81501

Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado
November 1, 2014 through October 28, 2015
to the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs
October 28, 2014

Executive Summary

1. Background

This section has been updated to reflect the 2015 Cemetery Expansion Project.

2. Physical Layout and Facilities

This section is unchanged.

3. Organization

This section is unchanged.

4. Functions

This section is unchanged.

5. Extra-Curricular Activities

This section is unchanged.

6. Burial Operations

Gravesite Utilization: Updated to reflect numbers, statistics, projections, etc. since last year's report.

2014 – 2015 Interments by Month: Updated to reflect numbers, statistics, projections etc., since last year's report.

Interments by Year: Updated to reflect numbers, statistics, projections etc., since last year's report.

7. Customer Satisfaction

Updated to reflect comments, numbers, statistics, etc., since last year's report.

8. Early Registrations

Updated to reflect numbers, statistics, projections etc., since last year's report.

9. Issues and Concerns

Issues and concerns from last year's report were updated to reflect their current status or eliminated if they were no longer relevant. New issues and concerns were documented.

Colorado Mesa University (formerly Mesa State College) Development: No new developments.

Water Issues: No new developments.

Cemetery Funding: Funding remains a major concern. Burial reimbursements from VA have increased to $747.00 (from $745.00) per veteran interment.

Equipment Replacement: The irrigation system's computer and software was replaced. Other equipment was replaced as well and is reflected in the Cemetery Expansion Project description in Section 9.

Personnel Issues: New FTE hired in September. A replacement for groundskeeper, John Ragar, who retired on October 21, 2014, was hired. However, he was unable to satisfactorily complete his probationary period. We will be looking to hire a permanent replacement in the immediate future. Until then, we have filled John's position with a temporary employee.

In the absence of a fourth FTE, we will need to hire a temporary employee for the April/May 2016 timeframe in time for the irrigation system startup.

Columbaria: Reflects the addition of four new columbaria and the placement into service of the first of these on January 5, 2015.

Sod: We suspended replacement of sod during the period due to the cemetery expansion project.

Roadway: The deterioration of cemetery roadways, reported last year, was addressed when all roadway asphalt was replaced with concrete as part of the cemetery expansion project.

In-Ground Gravesites: Unlike 2013, we had no problems with in-ground gravesites freezing during the 2014-2015 winter season.

Stonework: We were able to seal the stonework on our columbaria during the reporting period.

Painting: Due to the lack of resources, we are still unable to refinish and repaint the metal work at the Administration Building, Committal Shelter, Assembly Area and Riverside Parkway frontage.

Main Line Irrigation System Breaks: We continued to experience several major breaks during reporting period. Much of the line and many components, however, were replaced as part of the cemetery expansion project.

Rainbird Irrigation System: We were able to replace the computer and software for the system in December 2014. During the cemetery expansion project, we became aware that the complete pump station needed replacement. This development and the anticipated resolution are explained in this section.

Cemetery Expansion Project: The cemetery expansion project is described in this section.

10. In Closing

Closing remarks.

Status Report
Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado
November 1, 2014 through October 31, 2015
to the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs
October 28, 2015

1. Background

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado was authorized by the Colorado Legislature in 1999 to honor Colorado veterans. A grant to build the cemetery was obtained from the United States Veterans Administration (VA). Construction began in June 2001 and was completed in September 2002. The cemetery is located on 22.5 acres at 2830 Riverside Parkway (formerly D Road), Grand Junction, Colorado, just east of the Grand Junction Regional Center and south of the Grand Junction Readiness Center.

The cemetery opened on September 5, 2002 with a capacity of 3,337 units, including 1,758 units for casketed remains and 1,579 units for cremated remains (of which 861 were columbarium [wall] niches). Additionally, there were 775 memorial garden plots available for veterans whose remains were not recovered or were donated to science. The cemetery's capacity can be expanded, as necessary, in the future. In 2011, two new columbaria, providing an additional 168 niches each, were added to the cemetery. In 2015, a substantial expansion project added another 1,979 gravesites and improved infrastructure at the cemetery. This project is described in greater detail in Section 9.

The cemetery is intended to be a dignified final resting place for Colorado's veterans of the armed services, their spouses and eligible dependents. It has been designed to provide a place of meditation and quiet contemplation for veterans, their families and friends. There are memorial walks on either side of the creek running northeast to southwest through the cemetery. These walks pass by five columbaria in front of which are benches for visitors' convenience. The two new columbaria are located at the east and west ends of the northernmost windrow that crosses the property. There are landscaped areas for in-ground interments, which are characterized by thoughtful placement of trees, shrubs, and other plantings. These areas provide additional places for individual reflection.

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado conveys the appreciation of the people of Colorado to its veterans and their families for answering the call to duty and faithfully and honorably serving the United States of America and the State of Colorado.

2. Physical Layout and Facilities *(Figure 1)*

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado occupies 22.5 acres of land owned by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. Approximately 15 acres of this land is developed and in use. Two of these acres were developed in 2015 as part of the cemetery expansion project.

There are four facilities onsite: an Administration Building; a Committal Shelter; a Pump House; and, a Maintenance/Storage Building (known as the West Shop). There is an attached garage/light maintenance area at the Administration Building.

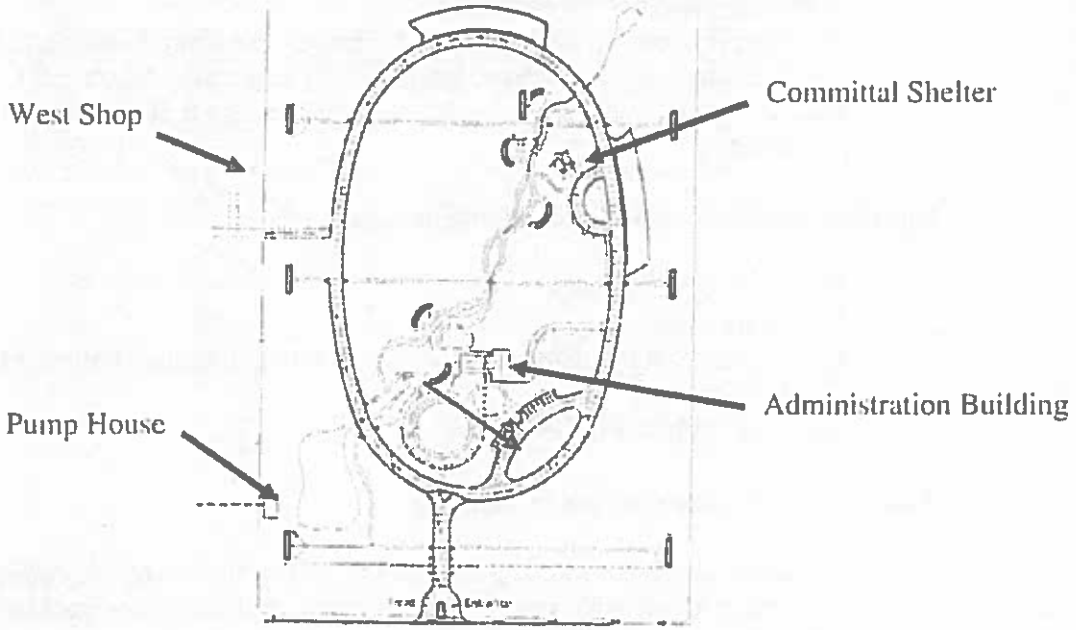

Figure 1

3. Organization

The organizational structure of the cemetery includes a Director, Program Assistant and three full-time grounds persons, one of whom, as of this report, is a temporary employee. During the growing season, an additional temporary employee may be added to supplement the full time crew. All employees currently report to the Director with oversight by the Program Assistant.

4. Functions

There are essentially four functions at the cemetery: management/administrative; operational; maintenance; and, landscaping. They involve various and diverse duties and responsibilities as listed below.

Management/Administrative Function

ELEMENTS

Interaction/coordination/scheduling (with funeral service providers and/or next-of-kin), to include:

Confirming eligibility of veterans, spouses, dependents for interment
Scheduling interments
Scheduling Committal Shelter

Assigning gravesites, plots, niches
Scheduling use of Visitors Room
Making preparations for interment, to include: assisting families, as needed, with military funeral honors, burial flags, Presidential Memorial Certificates
Making records requests through EVetRecs on behalf of veterans and family members

Interaction with veterans, spouses, dependents

Responding to inquiries
Distributing forms
Completing early registrations, i.e., early determinations of eligibility
Conducting tours
Assisting with records requests

Records and documentation, to include:

Preparing interment record packages (VMC Forms 01 and 02, copies of discharge paperwork, residency paperwork, and interment worksheet)
Preparing Interment Remembrances
Preparing interment tags and temporary markers
Preparing and distributing daily interment schedule & attachments with detailed interment instructions
Preparing and distributing burial certificates to appropriate boards of health
Preparing and maintaining manuals
Developing, maintaining and updating procedures
Generating and maintaining records, to include:
Records of interment (using USVA Burial Operations Support System [BOSS])
- Interment logs and registers
- Early registration logs
- Property lists
- PM schedules
- Non-exempt time records
- Demographic and statistical records

Maintaining and updating grave locator system
Preparing work schedules for operations personnel
Preparing and distributing reimbursement requests for US Department of Veterans Affairs

Monitoring and, when necessary, taking action with regard to systems and equipment warranties and guarantees

Performance of routine office tasks

Responding to in-person, telephonic, and written inquiries
Generating routine correspondence and reports
Ordering supplies and equipment

Filing
Tracking non-exempt time records
Initiating accounting processes
Coordinating volunteer efforts
Assigning tasks, monitoring and maintaining appropriate records of Criminal Justice Community Service clients and Mesa County work crews

Awareness and marketing efforts

Developing, preparing, and distributing presentations, pamphlets, booklets, posters, etc.
Making presentations to Veterans Service Organizations and other groups

Establishing and maintaining liaisons with appropriate agencies and organizations, to include:

National Cemetery Administration and other USVA agencies
Veterans Service Organizations
Veterans Service Officers
USVA Medical Center – Grand Junction
Grand Junction Regional Center
CDHS Division of Facilities Management
Community Service Groups
Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
Colorado Army National Guard
Others

Training and instruction

Attendance at appropriate seminars and training sessions
Training subordinates and support personnel

Headstones, niche covers, monuments and memorial plaques

Providing guidance for those ordering headstones and niche covers and those wishing to erect monuments or purchase memorial pillar and/or tree plaques
Ordering headstones and niche covers
Inspecting headstones and niche covers upon receipt for accuracy of inscription and compliance with standards
Processing associated paperwork and making required entries into BOSS
Selecting appropriate locations for monuments
Assigning memorial plaques
Generating and maintaining associated records and correspondence
Advising families when headstones, niche covers, and/or memorial plaques have been set

Gifts and donations

Processing financial gifts and donations for memorial plaques and niche vases

Operational Function

ELEMENTS

Burial Operations, to include:

Preparing Committal Shelter for services, including: setting up microphone, podium, flags, chairs, urn table
Preparing and transporting casket carriage to Committal Shelter
Setting up and preparing interment locations, to include: identifying, marking, opening graves/niches, placing drapes and temporary markers
Transporting caskets/urns and flowers to gravesites
Placing caskets and urns in gravesites
Closing gravesites and placing flowers
Setting and removing headstones and niche covers

Planning and preparations for and hosting veterans events, to include:

Memorial Day Ceremony
Veterans Day Ceremony
Wreaths Across America Ceremony

Safety and security

Operating fire and security alarm system

Installing monuments and memorial plaques

Maintenance Function

ELEMENTS

Custodial maintenance (i.e., janitorial services)

Maintain restrooms
Sweep, mop and vacuum floors
Empty trash and transport to dumpster
Wash windows
Replace consumables

Vehicle and equipment maintenance

Change oil
Replace filters
Lubricate as needed
Sharpen blades
Clean equipment
Effect minor repairs
Schedule more extensive repairs

Facilities repair and upkeep

Replace light bulbs
Clean and maintain facilities
Effect minor repairs
Schedule more extensive repairs

Snow removal

Remove snow from walkways and roadways using plow and/or sweeper
Remove snow from Committal Shelter using handheld tools

De-icing

De-ice walkways, Committal Shelter and roadways using commercial product and/or handheld tools

Landscaping Function

ELEMENTS

Developing landscaping schedule of services

Based on varied and diverse input, develop schedule(s) for different landscaping tasks

Irrigation system management and operation

Install, repair, replace sprinkler heads and/or other components
Monitor and adjust watering times in zones
Monitor, operate and maintain irrigation system computer
Service and lubricate pumps
Monitor system to ensure proper operation
Maintain ponds, stream corridor and water features
Implement contingency measures in event of system failure
Test system at beginning of season and ready for operation
Shut down and winterize system at end of season

Landscape maintenance, to include:

Installing/replacing sod
Seeding
Weeding
Pest control
Irrigating
Mowing
Trimming
Planting
Pruning
Aerating
Fertilizing

5. Extra-Curricular Activities

In addition to their normal functions, staff at the cemetery is heavily involved in other veterans-related tasks and activities on the Western Slope.

Management/Administrative staff was responsible for organizing the Grand Valley Combined Honor Guard and the cemetery director is a permanent member of its Board of Directors. As such, he is tasked with the responsibility of helping to oversee the Honor Guard and ensuring its efficient and effective deployment. The Grand Valley Combined Honor Guard has performed over 2,200 military funeral honors and numerous flag presentations, parades, school appearances and other ceremonies during the eleven years of its existence.

The Honor Guard's popularity has increased to the point where it is constantly in demand. Again this year, the Honor Guard, which consists of approximately 40 active members, has had to decline numerous invitations because of a lack of resources.

The cemetery's management/administrative staff has been and continues to be responsible for many other events, including:

Memorial Day Activities – Annually in May

Ensuring proper decoration of Cemetery and placement of individual flags on gravesites
Retreat Ceremony the night before Memorial Day
Flag Retirement and Burning Ceremony the night before Memorial Day
Memorial Day Program and Ceremony at Cemetery

Veterans Day Activities – Annually in November

Ensuring proper decoration of Cemetery
Veterans Day Program and Ceremony at Western Slope Vietnam War Memorial Park

Other Veterans-Related Activities (in Grand Junction, Fruita and Palisade)

Fourth of July Parades and Ceremonies
Fall Festival Parades
Wreaths Across America Program
Local School Presentations

6. Burial Operations

Gravesite Utilization *(Figure 2).*

As of October 30, 2015, the Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado has provided 3,297 interments to 2,421 veterans, 868 spouses and 8 dependent children. Distribution of these interments by gravesite type is shown below. This does not include the remains of a Civil War-era veteran who was discovered in Lake County, Colorado six years and was interred in this cemetery in January 2008.

Based on the total interments as of October 30, 2014, i.e., 3,297, the average interment rate is one a day, 5.02 a week since the cemetery opened, an increase of .1 since the last report.

INTERMENT LOCATIONS

	Total Available	In Use	Remainder Available	Percent In Use	Percent Available	Average Monthly Use	Months Remaining to Zero	Approx. Date of Zero	RESERVED
Wall Niche	1869	1304	565	69.77%	30.23%	8.14	69.38	7/11/2021	2
In-Ground Niche	628	539	89	85.83%	14.17%	3.37	26.44	12/31/2017	1
Single Vault	313	221	92	70.61%	29.39%	1.38	66.66	4/21/2021	2
Double Vault	934	605	329	64.78%	35.22%	3.78	87.07	12/24/2022	
Conventional	511	13	498	2.54%	97.46%	0.08	6,133.82	8/24/2519	
Memorial Garden Plot	775	120	655	15.48%	84.52%	0.75	873.99	8/13/2087	
	5,030	2,802	2,228						

Cemetery Opened : 9/5/2002

(Note: There are no reserved spaces except when both a husband and wife are veterans and choose to exercise their right to an individual gravesite. In those cases, a space is reserved for the survivor next to the decedent; totals do not reflect double occupancies)

Figure 2

Traditionally, cremation has been the choice of disposition ~ 62% of the time with ~60% of those opting for cremation choosing a columbarium niche over an in-ground niche.

2014 - 2015 Interments by Month *(Figure 3)*

CY 2014 had the greatest number of interments, 299, since the cemetery opened. Interments for CY2015 are running at a pace that, if it keeps up, will total around 325, an increase of 8.6%. Interments by month since November 1, 2014 are shown below.

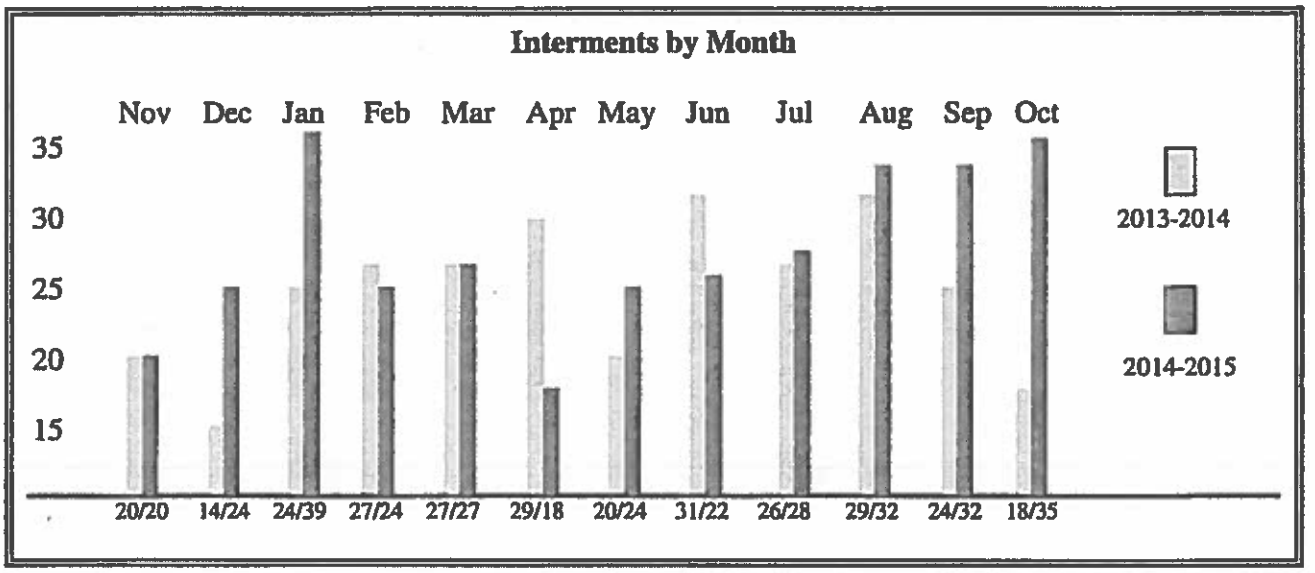

Figure 3

Interments by Year *(Figure 4)*

The interments of 3,297 veterans, spouses and/or dependents are broken down by year below.

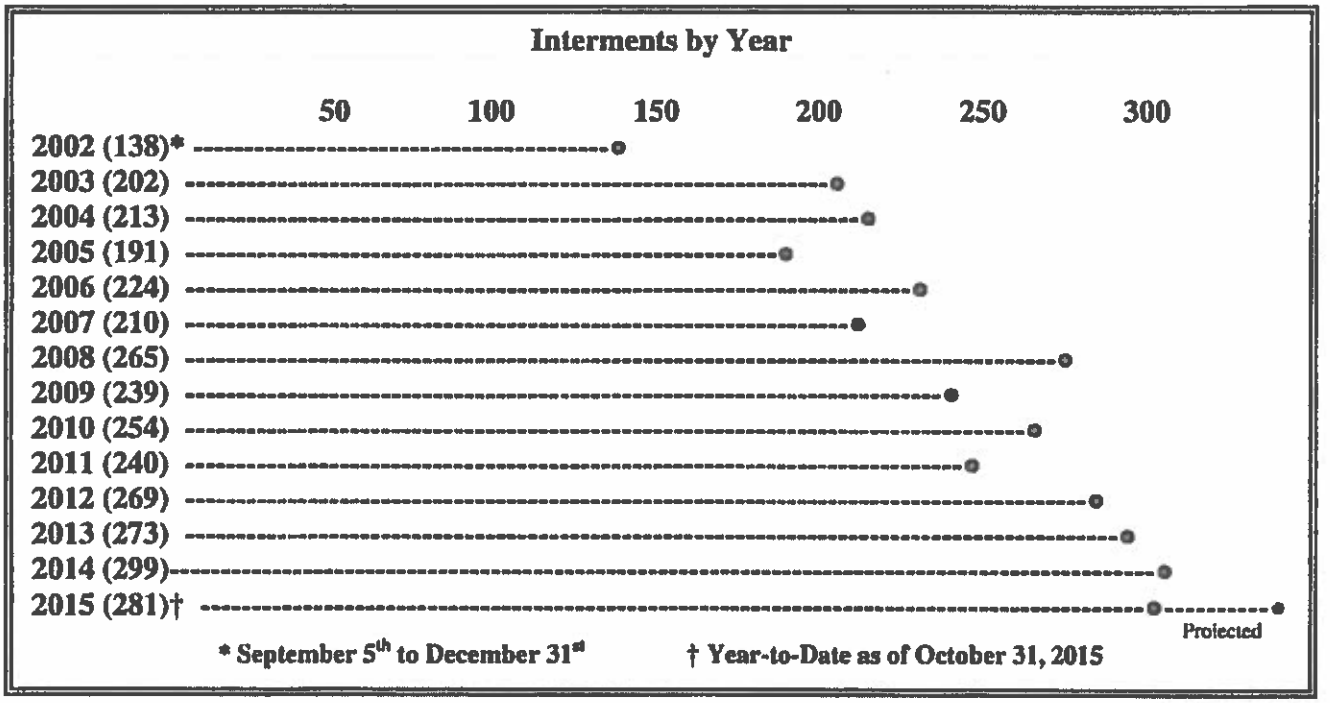

Figure 4

7. Customer Satisfaction *(Figure 5)*

The cemetery sends out Customer Satisfaction Surveys every three months to gauge the level of customer satisfaction for the previous quarter. This past reporting year, we were unable to conduct the 2nd and 3rd Quarter Surveys due to our extensive involvement in the cemetery expansion and improvement project. We will, however, resume these surveys with the 4th Quarter 2015 Survey at the end of the year.

Survey forms, along with stamped, self-addressed envelopes are sent to ~ 25% of the next-of-kin of those who were interred during the previous quarter. All surveys are anonymous, however, many respondents sign their names.

A scale of 1 to 5 is used with 4 - 5 considered a satisfactory rating. The average of these ratings is shown in *Figure 6* below.

On the surveys, there is room for any comments a respondent may wish to make. Some of the responses the cemetery has received are shown below (these are typical of the majority of responses):

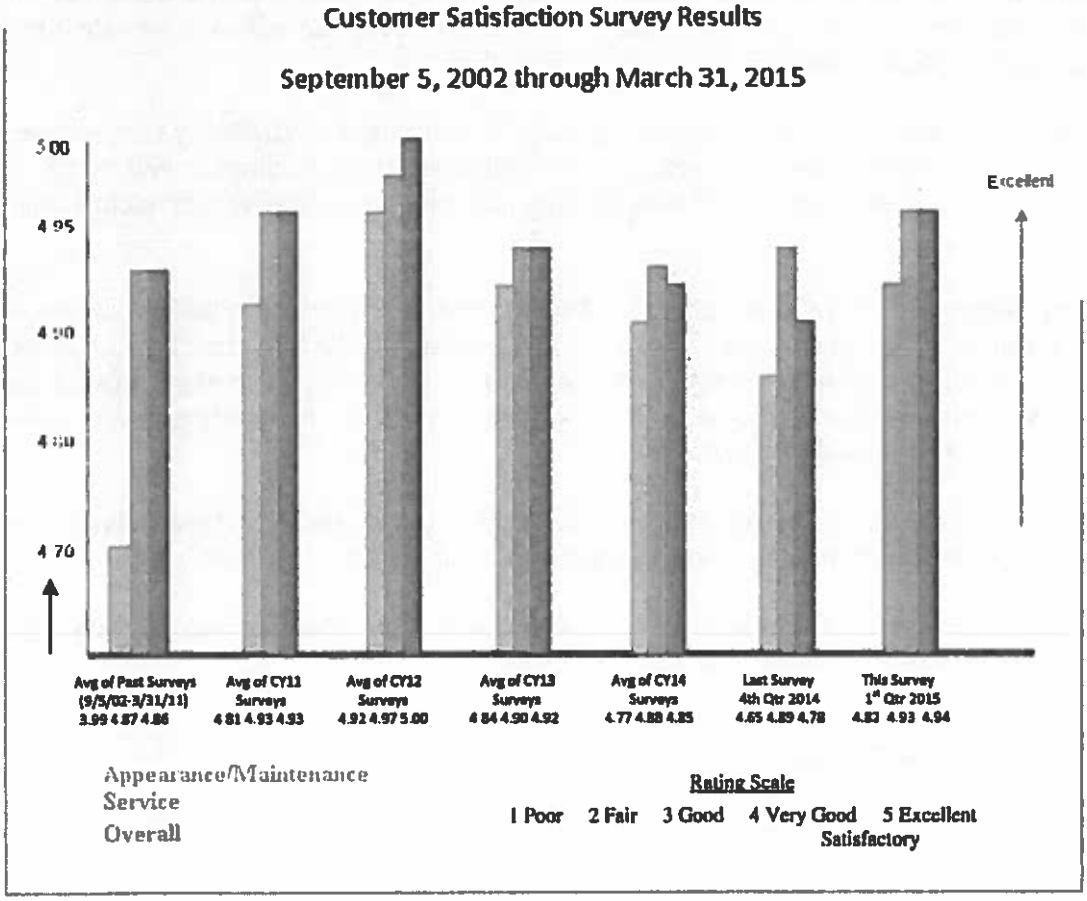

Figure 5

Comments from most recent Customer Satisfaction Surveys

1. "The whole package makes me proud to be a western CO citizen."
2. "This is a beautiful place to have my loved one!"
3. "Excellent all the way around! Thank you."
4. "My Mom & Dad are together. I feel a sense of peace each visit to the cemetery. Thank you."
5. "Wonderful. My brother was honored in every way."
6. "Thank you to all who helped to make our memorial day a very special one. Thank you for this wonderful place."
7. "Thank you for a great job!"

All responses are kept on file at the Cemetery and are available to anyone wishing to review them.

8. Early Registrations

In an attempt to better serve the local veterans community and at the same time attempt to predict future needs, the Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado offers a service not usually provided at most veterans cemeteries, i.e., Early Registration.

Early Registration allows a veteran to receive an early determination of eligibility for interment at the cemetery. A veteran will complete a cemetery form (VMC Form 1) and submit it with a copy of his or her discharge (e.g., DD214) and proof of residency (if the veteran's home of record was not in Colorado).

The cemetery determines the veteran's eligibility for interment and keep copies of the paperwork on file so that, when the time comes, it will be one less thing for the family to worry about. For those who did not complete early registration, there have been several instances where eligibility for interment could not be immediately determined, e.g., the family could not find the discharge. This delayed the interment until eligibility could be determined.

The ancillary benefit to the cemetery of such a program is that it allows cemetery staff to estimate future interments and incorporate the information into short and long range planning.

As of the date of this report, 4,300 veterans have registered. This represents 4,516 likely interments, including these veterans, their spouses and eligible dependents.

9. Issues and Concerns

Issues and concerns identified in previous reports are updated below and new issues and concerns have been added.

Colorado Mesa University (formerly Mesa State College) Development

There were no new developments with this issue during the timeframe covered by this report. We are continuing to monitor the situation.

Water Issues (Silt Buildup)

There were no new developments with this issue during the timeframe covered by this report, however, buildup of silt and moss in the stream corridor and holding ponds was addressed as part of the cemetery expansion and improvement project. Please see section on Cemetery Expansion Project below for additional information.

Cemetery Funding

Funding continues to be a problem and, unless something changes, it may not be sufficient for the future. This has continued to remain a significant concern. A stable source of funding for the cemetery needs to be identified and established, otherwise its long-term viability is in question.

Burial reimbursements from the VA were increased to $747.00 per veteran in October 2015, up from $745.00 previously. This represents 75% of the cost to inter an individual veteran. Spouses or other eligible dependents are not reimbursed. These reimbursements only account for about half of the cemetery's budget.

Equipment Replacement

The Rainbird computer and associated software were replaced. Other equipment was replaced as well and is described in the Cemetery Expansion Project section below.

Personnel Issues

We were able to hire a third FTE for our grounds crew and he started on September 15, 2015. We did lose long-time employee, John Ragar, to retirement. His replacement was hired as a temporary employee in October 2014 and became a permanent, probationary employee on November 1, 2015. He was, however, unable to satisfactorily complete his probationary period and was terminated in October 2015. We are currently filling his vacancy with a temporary grounds-person and will, hopefully, hire a permanent replacement prior to the end of the year.

While the third FTE helped us significantly, we still need to hire a temporary employee for the April/May 2016 timeframe to assist with grounds-keeping when the irrigation system comes on line for the 2016 season. It is our understanding that we will have the funding to do so.

Columbaria

We had achieved full capacity of the last of our existing columbaria, No. 7, on June 30, 2014.

(Traditionally, ~60% of all interments at this cemetery involve cremation with ~60% of those in columbaria niches).

From that date to January 5, 2015, we were unable to inter anyone in a columbarium niche. We *had* anticipated full-capacity being reached in the Fall of 2014.

Area funeral service providers were notified and asked to advise their clients accordingly. In addition, we temporarily waived our rule that committal services must take place concurrent with or after an interment. This allowed families to schedule memorial services and hold onto cremains until new columbaria were built. These arrangements worked very well and allowed us and the funeral service community to operate fairly close to normal during the period.

In late fall, as part of the Cemetery Expansion Project, the first of four new columbaria was constructed and placed into service on January 5, 2015.

Sod

We suspended our sod replacement program during the year due to the Cemetery Expansion Project as construction was anticipated to make those efforts pointless. As part of the project, however, large sections of the cemetery were re-sodded anyway.

Roadway

The asphalt roadway around the cemetery continued to deteriorate and more tripping hazards for those using walkers or crutches appeared. The cemetery expansion project addressed a great many of these concerns.

In-Ground Gravesites

Unlike the winter of 2013, we had no problems with in-ground gravesites freezing during the 2014-2015 winter season.

Stonework

As part of the cemetery expansion project, the stonework on the new columbaria was sealed.

Painting

Once again, primarily due to a lack of manpower, we were unable to refinish and repaint the wrought iron at the Administration Building, Assembly Area and Committal Shelter and on Riverside Parkway.

Main Line Irrigation System Breaks

We continued to experience major breaks in the irrigation system water lines the past year. This was due to the age of the system, its heavy usage and, in some cases, faulty installations

on the part of the original subcontractor. It continues to be a fairly costly Spring ritual. We were, however, fortunate in that the cemetery expansion project provided for replacement of a significant amount of piping and many components in areas that were excavated to install new vaults and plantings.

Rainbird Irrigation System

Up until this reporting period, we had had continuing problems with the Rainbird irrigation system computer and associated software. We were able to replace the computer and software which allowed us to address many, but not all, of the problems associated with the irrigation system.

During the course of the cemetery expansion project, described below, we learned that the cemetery's pump station, including most of the components therein, is reaching the end of its useful life and, unless major steps are taken to fix the problem(s), a catastrophic failure could reasonably be expected within the next five years.

This system is original to the cemetery, built in 2002. Any repair option would be of dubious value as many of the components are obsolete and very difficult, if not impossible, to replace; the touch screen, switch gear and variable frequency drive (VFD) to name a few.

The problem is exacerbated by the fact that it would take 8-10 weeks to build a new system plus additional time to install, test and certify the new system. Manufacture, installation, testing and certification would take place during the off-season. If the pump station were to fail, it would be during during operation, i.e., during the irrigation season, the result could be catastrophic. Possible results would include the loss of all trees, sod and other plantings that were part of the cemetery expansion project – a potential loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars.

As of this writing, we have been cleared to use funding in the expansion project's equipment budget to replace the pump station. This still leaves us to procure funding to replace the equipment that was originally in the project's equipment budget.

Cemetery Expansion Project *(Figure 6)*

On July 1, 2014, the cemetery received ~ $4M in funding to increase the interment capacities, expand and improve facilities and replace/repair infrastructure. The plan was to increase all types of gravesites by adding double, single and oversized vaults and four more columbaria; expand the West Shop to include improved facilities for grounds personnel and garage space for cemetery vehicles; expand the existing administration building to provide more storage; improve the roadway(s) within the cemetery; and, remove some of the silt that had accumulated in the upper and lower ponds and the streambed. The project also included funding for new and replacement vehicles and equipment, including new utility trucks, plowing and sanding capability for our existing pickup truck, a new Xerox Work Centre and new push mowers.

Actual work began in the first part of November 2014 and the project was substantially completed in October 2015. The ultimate aim was to position the cemetery to serve Colorado veterans to the year 2025.

The cemetery expansion and improvement project was completed on schedule and under budget and included:

- Replacement of asphalt with concrete on all roadways
- Additions to the maintenance shop and administration building resulting in: more efficient use of maintenance space; more storage space in the administration building; and, increased parking capacity for cemetery vehicles
- Two new parking lots for visitors at the Committal Shelter
- Four new columbaria
- 814 additional double vaults
- 428 additional single vaults
- 65 new oversized vaults
- New and improved landscaping features

The overall capacity of the cemetery has increased by 1,979 gravesites resulting in an overall capacity of 12,799 which should serve the needs of Colorado's veterans for the next ten plus years WITH THE EXCEPTION OF columbaria space. As previously noted, columbarium niches are the most common choice for veterans on the Western Slope. The four new columbaria, funded as part of this project, will provide enough niches to the year 2018. The cemetery really needs to add more columbaria if it is to meet these needs to the year 2025. It is estimated that another four columbaria will be needed to meet this objective.

This project represents the continuing commitment by the State and the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to Colorado veterans and their families who have faithfully and honorably served their state and their country.

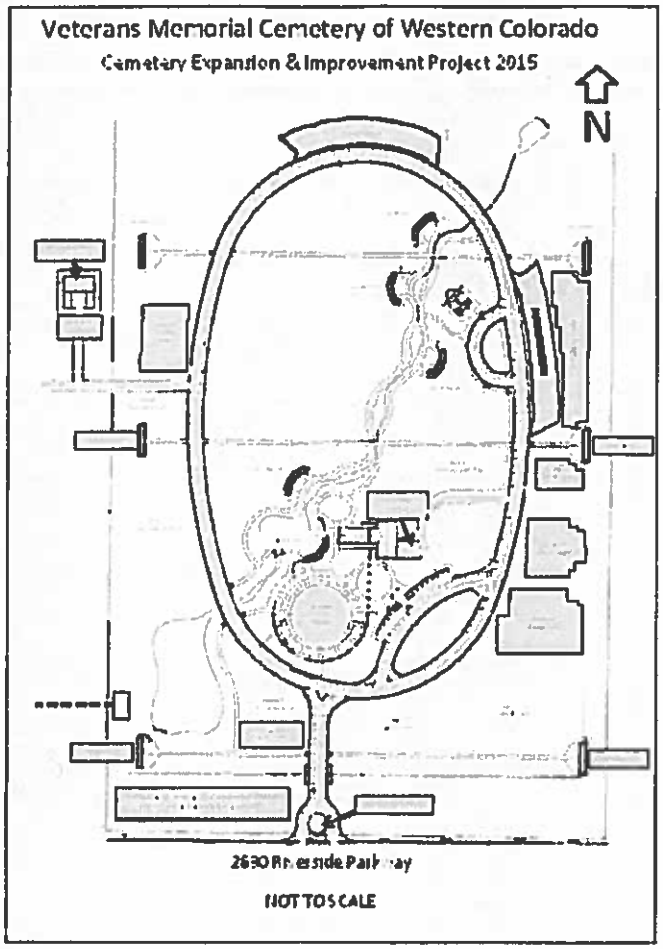

Figure 6

Areas in yellow indicate expansions, additions and improvements, not including landscaping

10. In Closing

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado continues to be one of the "crown jewels" of the State Veterans Affairs program on the Western Slope. To the veterans community and their families, it represents the State of Colorado's concern for and commitment to its veterans.

In spite of increased reimbursement, over the years, by the VA for veterans' interments, funding for the cemetery and its operations has become an issue this year with our operating budget continuing to be at the lowest levels since the cemetery opened. Hopefully, new funding sources will be found to maintain the high levels of appearance, operational efficiency and management effectiveness developed over the past 12 years.

The cemetery and its staff continue to enjoy the highest levels of support from the veterans community and this has been a significant contributor to any successes the cemetery has enjoyed.

Respectfully submitted,

S/

Richard J. Gigliotti
Director
Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado
Grand Junction, Colorado

COLORADO
Department of Local Affairs
Division of Property Taxation

October 6, 2015

William Robinson, Chairman
Colorado Board of Veterans
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
1355 South Colorado Blvd., Building C, Suite 113
Denver, Colorado 80230

Dear Mr. Robinson:

Per your request, I have provided below the number of properties and the exempted taxes for disabled veterans who have received the property tax exemption in 2014, payable in 2015. This data is provided to our office by the Colorado State Treasurer's Office. My office administers the program to determine if a veteran or a senior has applied on more than one property in the state and answers questions of county offices and taxpayers regarding the program. At this time we do not provide any other direct services to veterans in Colorado beyond the administration of the property tax exemption program.

For the 2014 tax year, property taxes paid in 2015; 4,185 properties owned by disabled veterans qualified for the exemption. The actual value of the exempted properties is $336,279,824.00; and the total exempted property tax amount for these properties is $2,250,408.84. We have not yet verified the status of the 2015 tax year applicants; those applications will be reviewed in October, and any exempt property tax amount will be calculated after those taxes are due in 2016.

Should you require accurate figures regarding the payment for the property tax exemption for disabled veterans, please contact Jamila Loftis at the State of Colorado Treasurer's Office located at 200 East Colfax Avenue, Room 140, Denver, Colorado 80203-1722. Other questions regarding the program or any other activities of the Division of Property Taxation please contact me.

Sincerely yours,

JoAnn Groff

JAG:mb

COLORADO
Department of
Labor and Employment

Workforce Development Programs
633 17th Street, Suite 201
Denver, CO 80202-3660

October 16, 2015

William Robinson, Chairman,
Colorado Board of Veterans
Department of Military and Veteran Affairs
1333 South Colorado Blvd. Building C, Suite 113
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Mr. Robinson,

The following information reflects the annual accomplishments of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Veterans Employment and Training Program. We continue to dedicate ourselves to providing Colorado's Veterans with outstanding employment and training services with the goal of providing Colorado Businesses with qualified and viable Veteran job seekers.

The enclosed report outlines the outreach services provided to Veterans utilizing the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG) and the state and county operated Workforce Center staff. We continue to align our Veterans Program to reflect the new guidelines outlined in the U.S. Department of Labor/VETS Veterans Program Letters, particularly VPL 03-14 which clearly refocuses and delineates the duties and responsibilities of the Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) and the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. These 38 individuals are strategically located within county and state operated Workforce centers that have the highest veteran population.

Our mission is to provide transitioning service members, veterans, spouses and wounded warrior caregivers with the employment services and training needed to succeed in the 21st Century workforce by meeting labor-market demands with qualified job seekers. As always, we look forward to our continued partnership with the Division of Veterans Affairs Office as we work towards meeting the employment needs of Colorado's Veterans and their families. Should you have any questions is regards to this report please feel free to contact Elaine Edon, State Veterans Program Coordinator at (303) 318-8937 or elaine.edon@state.co.us.

Sincerely,

Elise Lowe-Vaughn
Director
Workforce Programs, Policy and Strategic Initiatives

COLORADO
Department of Revenue
Division of Motor Vehicles
Physical Address:
1881 Pierce Street
Lakewood, CO 80214

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 173350
Denver, CO 80217-3350

June 8, 2015

Mr. William Robinson, Chairman
Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
1355 S. Colorado Blvd., Building C, Suite 113
Denver, CO 80230

Dear Chairman Robinson,

Pursuant to C.R.S. 28-5-703 below you will find a list of the services that are provided by the State of Colorado, Department of Revenue.

With regard to tax services, we have no programs aimed specifically at veterans. We are aware of several statutes that speak to active members of the U.S. military C.R.S. 39-22-103(8)(b) which allows Colorado military personnel who are out of the country for 305 or more days in a year to classify their military income as non-resident for tax purposes, and C.R.S. 39-22-610 which allows a filing extension for military personnel in a combat zone. The extension, which defers interest and penalty, lasts 180 days after the particular assignment has ended.

Service Members Civil Relief Act and the Military Spouse Residency Relief Act
The Department continues to ensure that service members and their qualifying spouses under the protections of the Service Members Civil Relief Act and the Military Spouse Residency Relief Act continue to receive the services, protections and tax exemptions afforded to them by these Acts.

Deployed Military Motor Vehicle Taxes and Fees
A member of the U.S. Armed Forces is eligible for the exemption of registration fees and pays a $1.00 specific ownership tax for their vehicles registered in Colorado while the service member is deployed outside the U.S. The service member must (1) show that he/she is serving outside the U.S.; AND (2) file a signed affidavit that the motor vehicle will not be operated on a highway while they are serving outside the U.S. If the service member has credit remaining on his/her motor vehicle at the time they are serving outside the U.S. the Department shall place that amount of credit into a "holding" account for the service member to apply to the payment of specific ownership tax and registration fees on any vehicle owned by the service member upon the return to the U.S. C.R.S. 42-3-107(10)(b) and 42-3-314

Colorado VETS-2-TRUCKS Program
This program is designed for individuals who are currently serving, are close to military discharge, or were discharged within the last 90 days. They must have experience driving heavy military trucks with a safe driving record for at least the last two years. These veterans may qualify for a Colorado Commercial Driver License (CDL) without having to take the commercial driver skills test.

On-Line Vehicle Registration
Forty-five counties allow online renewal of motor vehicle registrations. This will allow service members stationed outside of Colorado to maintain their vehicle registrations. This service may be accessed at http://www.colorado.gov/revenu/dmv - Vehicle Registration Renewal.

Military Identifier on Driver License
This program allows eligible applicants to have a military identifier added to their regular or commercial driver's license or identification card for no additional fee. The applicant may choose between Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, National Guard or Navy. The eligible applicant must present either his/her valid military identification card or a DD214. C.R.S. 42-2-114(10)and 42-2-303(5)

Veteran Designation on Identification Documents
This program allows eligible applicants to have a veteran identifier added to their regular or commercial driver's license or identification card for no additional fee. The eligible applicant must present sufficient documentation that they are a veteran for the purposes of any benefit or preferences given to veterans by the State of Colorado or any political subdivision of Colorado. C.R.S. 42-2-114(11) and 42-2-303 (4)

Registration Late Fee
The owner of a vehicle who is active military serving outside of Colorado when the registration grace period expires, if the vehicle has not been operated on any public highway in Colorado between the time the registration period expired, including the grace period and the time the vehicle is registered will be exempt late fees. C.R.S. 42-3-112(3)(b)

County Issuance of Disabled Veteran License Plates
To improve service to veterans that qualify to receive a disabled veteran license plate the Division of Motor Vehicles has piloted a service improvement project with Arapahoe and El Paso counties. This service improvement project allows counties to issue the first set of disabled veteran license plates that are exempt taxes and fees. Prior to the pilot with Arapahoe and El Paso counties veterans that were qualified to receive this license plate were required to have the first issuance of the plate be issued from the Division of Motor Vehicles office in Lakewood. Starting July 1, 2015, all counties will be able to issue the first time fee exempt plate at their motor vehicle offices. This will be an optional service that the counties can provide and eligible veterans are encouraged to contact their county motor vehicle office to see if their county participates in this program.

The Division of Motor Vehicles has special accommodations for veterans registering vehicles in Colorado and obtaining vehicle license plates as follows:

Alignment with the Service Members Civil Relief Act
On August 8, 2007 Colorado statutes were revised to align with the Service Members Civil Relief Act including clarifying the application of property tax laws and voter registration laws to service members. C.R.S. 42-3-104(9)

Authorization of Military Special License Plates for Motor Vehicles Owned by Trusts
The Department of Revenue is required to issue certain military special license plates for a motor vehicle owned by a trust if the trust is created for the benefit of a natural person who is qualified to receive the special license plate and the trust name includes a natural person who is qualified to receive the special license plate. C.R.S. 42-3-213(1)(g)

Person with Disability Military License Plates
House Bill 15-1026 allows for the Department to begin issuing person with disability military license plates for any military license plate beginning August 5, 2015. The qualifying applicant must demonstrate meeting the requirements for the military license plate and also meet the person with disability requirements under C.R.S. 42-3-204. C.R.S. 42-3-213(1)(h) and 42-3-218(2)(b)

U.S. Air Force License Plate
This plate may be issued to a serving member, honorably discharged or retired member of any component of the U.S. Air Force upon presenting a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government or any other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant is a serving member, honorably discharged or retired member of any component of the U.S. Air Force. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(17)

U.S. Army License Plate
This plate may be issued to any person upon presenting a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government, an honorable discharge from the U.S. Army, or sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the applicant is an active, reserve or retired member of the U.S. Army. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(12)

U.S. Army Fourth Infantry Division License Plate
This plate may be issued to a person who supports the U.S. Army Fourth Infantry Division. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(20)

U.S. Army Special Forces License Plate
This plate may be issued to a person who has received an honorable discharge or is an active or reserve member of the U.S. Army Special Forces upon presenting proof of honorable discharge or retirement or proof that the applicant is currently an active or reserve member of the U.S. Army Special Forces. The applicant must submit orders or DD214 form that shows an awarded prefix "3" or suffix "S" or a designation of "5G", 18/180 Series MOS, Special Forces Tab, OSS, or UNPIK-8240. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(18)

Bronze Star Medal License Plate
This plate may be issued to any person who has been awarded the Bronze Star medal. The applicant must present to the Department, a copy of the military order awarding the Bronze Star and a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government showing that the applicant received the award. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(14)(a)

Bronze Star with the "V" Medal License Plate
This plate may be issued to any person who has been awarded the Bronze Star with the "V" for valor distinction medal. The applicant must present to the Department, a copy of the military order awarding the Bronze Star with the "V" and a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government showing that the applicant received the award. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(14)(b)

Civil Air Patrol License Plate
This plate may be issued to any person that supports the Civil Air Patrol. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(27)

U.S. Coast Guard License Plate
This plate may be issued to retired, honorably discharged, active, auxiliary, or reserve members of the U.S. Coast Guard upon presenting a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government or other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant has an honorable discharge or proof that the applicant is currently an active, auxiliary, or reserve member of the United State Coast Guard. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(16)

Distinguished Flying Cross License Plate
This plate may be issued to a natural person who has been awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross upon presenting a copy of the military order awarding the Distinguished Flying Cross or any other evidence. The first set of plates per applicant is exempt the one-time fee normally associated with specialty license plates and by payment of the required taxes and fees. Subsequent sets of plates per applicant will be issued upon payment of a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(25)

Disabled Veteran License Plate
This plate may be issued to qualified applicants who provide documentation of authorization from either the Veteran's Administration or their branch of military service to support that they are 50% or more, permanently disabled due to a service connected injury. One set of plates may be issued without paying specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(5)

Disabled Veteran Handicap License Plate
This plate permits a mobility disabled veteran to park their vehicle, or a vehicle in which they are a passenger, in designated disability parking spaces. The application must meet two requirements for this plate. Qualified applicants must have (1) a 50% or more permanent, service connected disability AND; (2) a physical impairment verified in writing by a physician licensed to practice medicine in Colorado or a Commissioned Medical Officer. One set of these plates may be issued per applicant

without paying the specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional Disabled Veteran license plates (not handicapped) may be issued upon payment of a one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104, 42-3-204 and 42-3-213(5)(a)(II)

House Bill 15-1136 increases from one to two, the number of Disabled Veteran Handicap military license plates an applicant may receive beginning August 5, 2015. C.R.S. 42-3-204(3)(b)(II).

Fallen Service Member License Plate
This plate is issued to the current or past spouse, child, sibling, grandparent, or parent of a person who died in the line of duty while serving in the armed forces. The applicant for a Fallen Service Member license plate will be required to provide a DD214 form for the Fallen Service Member and other sufficient documentation to prove eligibility. The plate types include Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine and Navy. The first set of plates per applicant is exempt the one-time fee normally associated with specialty license plates and by payment of the required taxes and fees. Subsequent sets of plates per applicant will be issued upon payment of a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(15)

Former Prisoner of War License Plate
This plate may be issued to individuals that were on active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces during a period of armed conflict and were incarcerated by an enemy of the U.S. One set of plates may be issued without paying specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. If a deceased former prisoner of war was issued a Former Prisoner of War license plate, the surviving spouse may retain the registration of the Former Prisoner of War license plate by paying all required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(3)

Honorably Discharged Veteran License Plate
This plate may be issued to any person who has received an honorable discharge from any branch of the U.S. Armed Services or who is retired from a branch of the Armed Services. The applicant must present the form DD214 or their honorable discharge documents to obtain this plate. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-231(4)

Korean War Veteran License Plate
This plate may be issued to any natural person upon providing proof that he/she was a member of the U.S. Armed Forces between June 27, 1950 and January 31, 1955. The applicant must present the form DD214 or other military separation papers that indicate the dates of time served in the Armed Forces. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(9)

Medal of Honor License Plate
This plate may be issued to qualified applicants who are a recipient of the Medal of Honor. The applicant must present to the Department, a letter of verification from the appropriate branch of the U.S. Armed Forces that the applicant has been awarded a Medal of Honor. These individuals may obtain one set of plates without paying the specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(7)

Medal of Valor License Plates
These plates may be issued to a natural person who has been awarded a military award for valor. When applying for this plate, the applicant must present a copy of the military order awarding the military award for valor, which includes the following awards:

Navy Cross	Air Force Cross
Distinguished Service Cross	Silver Star

These individuals may obtain one set of plates without paying the specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of the one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(10)

National Guard License Plate
This plate may be issued to an individual that provides proof that he/she is an active or retired member of the Colorado National Guard. An applicant shall submit a proof of eligibility form prepared by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs verifying active or retired status. If the owner of a vehicle registered with a National Guard license plate ceases to be an active member of the Colorado National Guard and has not qualified for retirement from the Colorado National Guard, such person shall return the special license plates to the Department upon expiration of the registration. Upon retiring from the Colorado National Guard, a person wishing to retain such special license plates shall submit a verification or retired status that is issued by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to establish eligibility for retention of the plate. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-218

Navy Seal License Plate
This plate may be issued to a natural person who has received an honorable discharge, is retired, or is an active or reserve member of the United States Navy Seals. To qualify for the plate, an applicant must submit a DD214 form issued by the United States Government and a certification from the UDT/SEAL Association, Inc., the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the UDT/SEAL Association, Inc., or a successor organization. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(26)

North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Command Commemorative License Plate
This plate may be issued to any person that desires to commemorate the North American Aerospace Defense Command's 50th anniversary. This plate is limited issue commemorative plate that will only be issued from July 1, 2008 through January 1, 2010, or when available inventory is depleted, whichever is later. Plates issued within this period may continue to use those plates after January 1, 2010 until they become damaged, destroyed, lost, stolen or unreadable. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(19)

Operation Desert Shield/Storm License Plate
This plate may be issued to a natural person that provides a DD214 form issued by the United States Government or other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant is a veteran of the armed services who served between August 2, 1990, and February 28, 1991. The plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(24)

Pearl Harbor Survivor License Plate
This plate may be issued to qualified applicants who were members of the U.S. Armed Services on December 7th, 1941 and were stationed and present at Pearl Harbor located on the island of Oahu, during the hours of 7:55 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. (Hawaii Time) or offshore at a distance not to exceed three miles from the island. Additionally this individual must have received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Armed Services and hold a current membership in a national organization of survivors on the attack on Pearl Harbor. Applicants may obtain one set without paying the specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of $50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(6)

Purple Heart License Plate
This plate may be issued to qualified applicants who have been awarded a Purple Heart medal for wounds received in combat at the hands of an enemy of the United States. An applicant must present a copy of the military order awarding the Purple Hear medal or other sufficient evidence that indicates that the applicant received the Purple Heart medal. These individual may obtain one set of plates without paying specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(2)

U.S. Marine Corps License Plate
This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof that he/she has received an honorable discharge, is retired or is an active or reserve member of the U.S. Marine Corps. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(8)

U.S. Navy License Plate
This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof that he/she has been honorably discharged, is retired or is an active or reserve member of the U.S. Navy. The applicant must submit the DD214 or other evidence to demonstrate that they are a qualified applicant. The plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(13)

Veteran of Afghanistan War License Plate
This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof that he/she was a member of the U.S. Armed Services between October 7, 2001 and the end of the Afghanistan conflict. The applicant must submit the DD214 or other evidence to demonstrate that they are a qualified applicant. The plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(21)

Veteran of Iraq War License Plate
This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof that he/she was a member of the U.S. Armed Services between March 20, 2003 and the end of the Iraq conflict. The applicant must submit the DD214 or other evidence to demonstrate that they are a qualified applicant. The plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(22)

Vietnam Veterans License Plate
This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof of service in the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam engagement, specifically, August 7, 1964 to January 27, 1973. Proof of service includes the DD214 or other evidence to demonstrate this requirement. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(11)

World War II Veteran License Plate
This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof that he/she was a veteran of the U.S. Armed Services between September 16, 1940, and July 25, 1947. The applicant must submit the DD214 or other documents to demonstrate that they are a qualified applicant. These individuals may obtain one set of plates without paying specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(23)

U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division License Plate
This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof that he/she was honorably discharged, retired, reserve, or active member of the 10th Mountain Division of the United States Army. The applicant must submit a DD214 form issued by the United States Government or other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant is a veteran, a reserve member, or an active member of the 10th Mountain Division of the United State Army. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time $50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(29)

USS Colorado Submarine License Plate
This plate may be issued to any person who supports the USS Colorado Submarine (SSN-788). This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time $50.00 fee and required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(28)

As of January 1, 2015, the Department records indicate that 131,779 vehicles were registered in the State of Colorado with one of the military plates listed above.

Between January 2015 and the present, the Department has hired 7 veterans. We continue to be grateful for the services provided by our veterans and we as individuals are mindful of their contributions to our country and ourselves when we render them service.

Sincerely,

Barbara J. Brohl

Barbara J. Brohl
Executive Director

C.R.S 33-12-103.5 (1) - Columbine annual pass - As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires, a person is "disabled" if the person has been determined to be totally and permanently disabled by the social security administration, the division of worker's compensation or pursuant to rule or regulation of the division.

The current fee for the Columbine annual pass is $14.00 and also provides entry into any of our 42 State Parks. Again, this pass does not provide for further discounts such as camping or cabin/yurt rentals. Disabled Veteran's are encouraged to apply for a Columbine Pass even if they have the Disabled license plate. The applicant must be a Colorado resident and complete an application at either our Denver office or one of our Regional Offices. If the applicant is on VA disability, they may contact the Veteran's Administration to request a letter of documentation as to their disability. In return, The Veteran's Administration can provide a form letter which will fulfill the required documentation.

Veterans 64 years of age or older who are Colorado residents may also qualify for the Aspen Leaf (Senior Citizen) Annual Pass at a cost of $60 per year.

C.R.S 33-4-104 - (1) Any active or retired member of the United States armed forces while stationed as a resident patient at any United States armed forces hospital or convalescent station located within Colorado, any resident patient at a veterans administration hospital ...may obtain a fishing license free of charge, valid for taking fish during the period of residency only, under rules and regulations of the commission.
(2) Any Colorado resident on active duty outside this state with any branch of the armed forces of the United States may obtain, from the division of wildlife, a fishing license free of charge, valid for taking fish while such person is in this state on temporary leave from such duty, but not to exceed a total of thirty days during any year. (3) (a) Any resident of this state who has received a purple heart for service in the United States armed forces or who is a disabled veteran may obtain from the division of wildlife, free of charge, a lifetime resident combination small game hunting and fishing license.

Commission Regulation #206(B)(4)(f) Wounded Warrior Hunting Licenses The Director may make certain deer, elk, and pronghorn licenses available to qualified participants in any United States Armed Services wounded Warrior programs.
1. Applicants must be members of the United States Armed Forces, who are residents of, or stationed in, Colorado returning from post-September 11, 2001 overseas contingency operations who have been so severely injured during combat, including combat-related support activities that they will require years of intense, ongoing care or assistance. Additionally, applicants must be members of a United States Armed Services Wounded Warrior program, as defined in 33-4-102(1.9) C.R.S., and must be assigned to a military medical treatment facility at the time of application for this program.
Commission Regulation - #206(B)(4)(h)(1) (bb) In addition to the $3 application fee, an unsuccessful applicant (except youth as defined by 33-4-117 C.R.S., lifetime license holders and Colorado resident military personnel on active duty outside Colorado), or one who applies using a first choice hunt code established for the purpose of accumulating a preference point only, for deer, elk, pronghorn or bear will be assessed a $25 fee to receive a preference point unless they have purchased one of the following: an annual license (fishing, small game or resident combination small game/fishing license, furbearer) for the year previous to which they are seeking a preference point; any big game license for the previous year or a current draw license for the species for which they are seeking a preference point. The $25 fee, per species, shall entitle the hunter to preference points for any unsuccessful deer, elk, pronghorn or bear application in that year.

COLORADO
Parks and Wildlife
Department of Natural Resources

6060 Broadway
Denver, CO 80216
Phone (303) 291-7379

October 16, 2015

Colorado Board of Veterans
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
William Robinson, Chairman
1355 South Colorado Blvd. Building C, Suite 113
Denver, CO 80230

Dear Mr. Robinson:

Per your annual request, under State Statute and Wildlife Commission regulation, the Division of Parks and Wildlife offers, the following types of licenses and services to our states' veterans or active military:

C.R.S 33-12-106 - (1) Any resident who displays on the resident's vehicle a Colorado disabled veteran's license plate pursuant to section 42-3-304 (3) (a), C.R.S., shall be allowed free entrance to any state park or recreation area, not to include campgrounds, on any day of the year such park or area is open. For the purpose of this section, display of such license plates shall entitle the disabled veteran and passengers in such veteran's vehicle to enter such park or recreation area free of charge.

C.R.S 33-12-106 - (2.3) The commission may promulgate rules to allow free entrance to any state park or recreation area, not to include campgrounds, yurts, or other amenities and services offered, for veterans on one day each year. The commission may determine by rule which day veterans are allowed free entrance to state parks and recreation areas.

> Commission Regulations CCR 445 -#700-2(j) Any vehicle occupied by a current, reserve or honorably discharged member of any United States military service, on the State observance of Veteran's Day. At least one form of past or present military identification shall be presented at the Park entrance. Acceptable forms of military identification include:
>
> - DD214;
> - Active, retired or veteran military cards.
> - The display of military license plates.

(New for 2015) C.R.S. 33-12-106 (2.4) (a) The commission shall promulgate a rule to allow veterans, including active duty personnel, free entrance to any state park or recreation area, not to include campgrounds, yurts, or other amenities and services, for the month of August each year. The commission may promulgate a rule setting evidence standards to show a person is a veteran and issue a sticker or other device that identifies a person as a veteran for future entrance. The commission may also charge a fee for issuing the sticker or other device that identifies a person as a veteran, but the fee must be based on the direct and indirect cost of issuing the sticker or other device.

In addition to those very specific programs, Veterans may also qualify for:

Bob D. Broeneld, Director, Colorado Parks and Wildlife • Parks and Wildlife Commission: Robert W. Bray, Chair • Chris Castillian, Vice Chair
Jeanne Horne, Secretary • John Howard, Jr. • Bill Kane • Dale Pecel • James Pribyl • James Vigil • Dean Wingfield • Michelle Zimmerman • Alex Zipp

Commission Regulation-#206(B)(4)(h)(1)(ee) In lieu of applying through the regular limited license draw, any active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who is stationed at any military facility in Colorado and actively deployed outside the United States, or any active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who is a Colorado resident and is deployed outside the United States, shall, upon their return to the United States, be eligible to apply for preference points for any limited license draw that occurred during their absence. Applications for preference points shall be made on forms provided by the Division and filed within six months upon the member's return to the United States.

Commission Regulation- #206(B) (6) (d) Any active duty member of the United States Armed Forces stationed at any military facility in Colorado and actively deployed outside the United States, or any active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who is a Colorado resident and is deployed outside the United States, shall be allowed a preference for the purchase of leftover licenses prior to their sale to the general public.

As of October 13, 2015 the Division has issued license year-to-date 686 free combination small game and fishing licenses to veterans with disabilities; we have received one request for military leftover license privileges and no requests for military applications for preference points and have issued 3 Wounded Warrior big game licenses.

We look forward to continuing to serve those who have sacrificed so much. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Bob D. Broxmeid
Director, Colorado Division of Park and Wildlife

Cc: Mike King - Executive Director, Department of Natural Resources
Gary Thorson - Assistant Director, I & E Branch, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Henrietta Turner - Manager, License Administration, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
File