



**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

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# News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **VA Expanding Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery *Ann Arbor Firm Awarded \$1.3 Million Design Contract***

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) awarded an architect-engineer contract for more than \$1.3 million to SmithGroup JJR, LLC, to prepare construction documents for a gravesite expansion and other improvements at the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery in Elwood, Ill.

“With the upcoming expansion and improvement of VA’s second largest cemetery, the Department will ensure that memorial benefits for Illinois Veterans are available for many more years,” VA’s Acting Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs Steve L. Muro said.

For this phase of the project, the firm based in Ann Arbor, Mich., will receive \$1,345,946 to design a 20-acre site that will support 10 years of projected burial needs. This phase of development will include approximately 11,000 pre-placed crypts, 6,500 columbaria niches and additional sections to accommodate in-ground interment of cremated remains.

The project will also include a main gate renovation; additional signs throughout the cemetery; improvements to an assembly area, including accessibility improvements; committal shelter enhancements; a new roadway system and improvements to existing roadways; parking in newly developed sections and improvements to parking and walkways; grading, drainage, fencing and landscaping; a utility distribution system; and environmental preservation and mitigation.

This design project is scheduled for completion in spring 2010.

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## **Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery Design Contract 2/2/2/2**

The public information center will receive upgraded accessibility features and incorporate Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) improvements. The LEED Green Building Rating System, developed by the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC), provides a suite of standards for environmentally sustainable construction reviewed by more than 10,000 membership organizations that comprise the USGBC.

Veterans with a discharge issued under conditions other than dishonorable, their spouses and eligible dependent children can be buried in a national cemetery. Other burial benefits include a burial flag, a Presidential Memorial Certificate and a government headstone or marker – even if they are not buried in a national cemetery.

In the midst of the largest cemetery expansion since the Civil War, VA now operates 130 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico and 33 soldiers' lots and monument sites. More than 3 million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict — from the Revolutionary War to the current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan — are buried in VA's national cemeteries on nearly 18,000 acres of land.

Information on VA burial benefits can be obtained from national cemetery offices, from the Internet at <http://www.cem.va.gov> or by calling VA regional offices toll-free at 800-827-1000. To make burial arrangements at the time of need, call the national cemetery scheduling office at 800-535-1117.

For more information about the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery, contact the cemetery staff at (815) 423-9958.

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