



Hello everyone - here's the latest e-newsletter from VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR – Central/Northeast). What started out relatively quiet, news-wise, has gotten very busy in the last few days and there's a lot of great information below. If you have any veterans-related material you want disseminated far and wide in the next mailing, send it my way and I'll be sure to get it out there. Also, if you know of someone who may benefit from receiving this e-newsletter, or if you have any comments or suggestions, please let me know at Peter.Vicaire@va.gov.

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- 1. VA Office of Tribal Government Relations Symposium:** Only 2 weeks until the conference for American Indian Veterans, VA staff, and other service providers – taking place on April 30/May 1 in Rapid City, SD. The agenda is attached. If you haven't already, please let me know if you plan on attending by calling me at 651-405-5676 or email me at Peter.Vicaire@va.gov. Rooms can be reserved (\$77/night) in a block at the hotel by calling 1-605-348-4000. If you've made hotel reservations or are making them soon, please ensure you're in the VETERANS block. Also, I have a recent agenda addition that will be squeezed in – a representative from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) will be on hand to discuss job opportunities and recruitment efforts for Indian Veterans in the Fort Berthold, ND area.

The 2-day event in Rapid City will include presentations on:

- A. VA "Healthcare 101": Eligibility, Enrollment, Billing
- B. VA/Tribal Health/IHS: Reimbursement/Sharing Agreements
- C. Home Health Initiatives/Type 2 Diabetes Prevention
- D. Suicide Prevention
- E. Women Veterans
- F. PTSD/Evidence-Based Therapy
- G. Nagi Kikcho Pi – "Calling One's Spirit"
- H. Role of the Veteran in Tribal Communities
- I. Listening Session with Senior federal and state (SD) officials
- J. Housing for Veterans in Indian Country (VA/IHS/HUD)
- K. VA Homeless Programs
- L. Dept. of Labor: Veterans Employment & Training Services (VETS)
- M. VA Veterans Justice Outreach

- N. VBA “Benefits 101”: Compensation/Pension, Education
- O. VA for Vets: Working for the U.S. veterans Affairs
- P. Native American development Corporation (NADC): Government Contracting for Veteran-Owned Businesses
- Q. Small Business Administration (SBA): Office of Native American Affairs
- R. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Job Opportunities for Indian Veterans

2. **OTGR Eastern Region Summit:** My colleague, Erika Moott, is hosting her respective event on May 7-8 in Cherokee, NC. Check out this link for her full agenda and more information on all of our events: http://www.va.gov/tribalgovernment/upcoming_events.asp. She can be contacted directly at Erika.Moott@va.gov.

3. **Tribal Veterans Representative (TVR) Program:** Tribal Veterans Representative (TVR) Outreach Workers “are appointed and supported by Tribal governments but formally trained by the VA; they function as liaisons between [V]eterans, the VA, and other community organizations. Made up primarily of volunteers, TVRs work closely with all agencies in the community to help [V]eterans obtain needed services to information and assistance completing paperwork for healthcare enrollment, claims benefits, education benefits, and home loan benefits. <http://www.ruralhealth.va.gov/native/programs.asp>

The Tribal Veterans Representative is generally an American Indian or Alaska Native Veteran endorsed or sponsored by the Tribe or Tribal leaders and helps Veterans access their VA benefits. The TVR acts as a liaison between the Veterans Administration and Veterans and assists them with filing claims and/or other services they may need. They provide information, outreach and assistance to Veterans and their families, as well as resources that are available to them through the VA, the Tribal community, federal and state governments, and other non-VA sources. Training is provided by the VA, but TVRs are not VA employees. They are recognized representatives of a Tribal organization. Role of the Tribal Veterans Representative; TVR Resource Guide/Training Manual. Representing the TVR program and providing training are W. J. “Buck” Richardson, the Minority Veterans Program Coordinator, Rocky Mountain Health Network (VISN 19) and the Montana Healthcare System in Helena, Montana; and James Floyd, FACHE, Network Director, VA Heartland Network (VISN 15), Veterans Health Administration. The TVR program began in 2001 and training is generally held the last week in April at Ft. Harrison in Helena, Montana. **For more information, contact Buck Richardson at william.richardson@va.gov**

Here is some recent info from Buck Richardson: “This year’s MT TVR training is two weeks away, if you haven’t registered for the training yet please do so as soon as possible. I hope to have the agenda completed and on the site below by tomorrow. The hotels are all listed for you with addresses and phone numbers to help with

your reservations. We appear to have a very good class building up and are looking forward to this year's training, we just completed a training in Michigan that was very productive and will lead to further trainings later this year. Please go to the link below if you haven't completed your registration and let us know you are planning on attending as soon as you can this week so we can plan for supplies. You should see the agenda tomorrow. We look forward to seeing everyone soon. We are trying something different this year for the TVR training the site below is now open for you to register for this year's training, please click on the site and register for the 2013 TVR Training at Ft Harrison, MT if you are planning on attending the session **April 28th thru May 3rd, 2013.** <http://www.regonline.com/2013rockymountaintvrtraining>"

4. **Tribal Veterans Courts:** "A veterans court is a specialized court that allows veteran participants charged with a criminal offense to voluntarily participate in a judicially supervised treatment plan. These courts serve veteran participants who suffer from a serious mental health disease and/or substance abuse. In most such programs, once a veteran participant pleads guilty or no contest to at least one charge, he or she is diverted to a treatment program. His or her progress is monitored throughout the duration of the program by regular appearances in court. Successful completion of the treatment program results in dismissal of charges or reduced charges. To date no Indian nations are known to have created their own veterans courts. This guide is designed to provide interested tribes with information necessary to establish such a court and to process cases involving veteran offenders through their court system. This guide provides general guidance on a tribal veterans court's mission and goals, the court team's duties and responsibilities, the court's policies and procedures, and the veterans mentoring program, resources. At heart, a veterans court is very similar to wellness courts, therapeutic courts and drug courts, which a tribe may already have in place. A tribal court can use all or any part of these guidelines to create a veterans court or use them to supplement court rules, policies, and procedures it currently has in place." See the attached document from the University of Arizona for more information on tribal veterans courts.
5. **Tribal Veterans Training, Employment and Recruitment Program:** The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is implementing a recruitment effort for Indian Veterans to work as Petroleum Engineering Technicians (PET) with a focus on the Ft. Berthold Reservation in North Dakota. A representative from BLM will present briefly at the Rapid City conference on May 1. I will disseminate the info as I get it but for now, if you have any questions, contact Mark Schaefer - mrschae@blm.gov Here's an example of a current job opportunity now open in Dickinson, ND. <https://www.usajobs.gov/GetJob/ViewDetails/341510100>
6. **Grants available from US Labor Department to provide job training, employment services for 2,600 homeless veterans - *Groups nationwide invited to compete for up to \$5 million in funds.*** WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Labor today announced the availability of up to \$5 million to fund 16 or more Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program grants. Approximately 2,600 veterans will receive job training and related services to help them succeed in civilian

careers. “Every day, our service members and their families make tremendous sacrifices for their country. Although homelessness among veterans has fallen, too many of our heroes still are without jobs or homes,” said acting Secretary of Labor Seth D. Harris. “Through these grants, the Labor Department will provide those who have served our nation with the opportunity for a fresh start and a good job.” Funds for the grants will be awarded on a competitive basis to state and local workforce investment boards, public agencies, nonprofit organizations, **tribal governments**, and faith-based and community organizations. Because these groups are intimately connected with their local economies and the needs of homeless veterans, they can offer occupational, classroom and on-the-job training, as well as job search and placement assistance, including follow-up services. Awards will range from \$100,000 to \$300,000 each. HVRP is recognized as extraordinarily efficient and effective, and is the only federal program that focuses exclusively on the employment of homeless veterans. The solicitation for grant applications is available at <http://www.grants.gov>. For more information, visit that site and <http://www.dol.gov/vets>, or contact grants officer Cassandra Mitchell at [202-693-4570](tel:202-693-4570).

7. **Disabled Veterans TAX Refund:** Disabled Veterans may be eligible to claim a federal tax refund based on: an increase in the Veteran's percentage of disability from the Veteran's Administration (which may include a retroactive determination) **or** the combat-disabled Veteran applying for, and being granted, Combat-Related Special Compensation, after an award for Concurrent Retirement and Disability. To do so, the disabled Veteran will need to file an amended return, Form 1040X, to correct a previously filed Form 1040, 1040A or 1040EZ. An amended return cannot be e-filed. It must be filed as a paper return. Disabled Veterans should include all documents from VA and any information received from Defense Finance and Accounting Services explaining proper tax treatment for the current year. Note: It is only in the year of the VA reassessment of disability percentage (including any impacted retroactive year), or the year that the CRSC is initially granted or adjusted, that the Veteran may need to file amended returns. If needed, Veterans should seek assistance from a competent tax professional before filing amended returns based on a disability determination. Refund claims based on an incorrect interpretation of the tax law could subject the Veteran to interest and/or penalty charges. For detailed information, visit <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Military/Special-Tax-Considerations-for-Veterans>.
8. [NORTH DAKOTA] **New Town, ND Stand Down** – see the attached document for more info on the event which will occur on May 14-15 (0800-1630) at the 4 Bears casino and Lodge in New Town, ND. ALL veterans who have served in the United States Armed Services are welcome – as well as any family members and/or widows who may have questions about VA benefits. For more info you can also call 701-239-3274.
9. [NORTH DAKOTA] **Veterans Art Fair:** The Devils Lake Chapter of Disabled American Veterans is hosting its first annual Veterans Art Fair. It’s going to take

place on May 25th from 1200-1600 at the Holiday Mall at Devil's Lake, ND. There will be a silent auction, free coffee and snacks, bag raffle, and homeless veterans artwork will be on display. All proceeds go directly to the DAV. See the attached document for more information. To pre-register email Jim Hanson – jhhanson@gondtc.com or call him at 701-381-9485. You can also contact Ellen McKinnon at 701-866-2446 or email her at ellen_mckinnon@usc.salvationarmy.org

- 10. [WISCONSIN] Supporting Our Heroes: Getting the Most Out of State and Federal Veterans Programs/Marching to War – Wisconsin Military History from the Tribal Perspective.** The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) will be hosting a 2-day event on April 26 (1300-1700) and April 27 (0900-1700). This April 26 session will bring together state and federal officials in the areas of education, homeless programs, employment, small business development, licensing and certification, and tribal programs with veterans from throughout Wisconsin. The second day will have Tribal scholars and visiting experts on site to discuss the role of Wisconsin's tribes in shaping our state and national histories. See the (2) attached documents for more info on this pretty exciting event.
- 11. [WISCONSIN] Ho-Chunk/Tomah VAMC Veterans Benefits Fair:** All Veterans are welcome at this event, which will take place on May 15 (1300-1600) at the Ho-Chunk Tribal Office Building Atrium, and include information on Registration, Enrollment & Eligibility, Homeless Veterans Initiative, Veterans Transportation System, Audiology Services, Outreach & Health Promotion, Women's Health Coordinator, WDVA Home Loan & Job Program, OEF/OIF Program, State Benefit Programs
- 12. VA Budget - \$153 Billion:** see the attached press release for more info on VA's budget.
- 13. Hopi Code Talkers Recognition Day:** "A Code Never Broken Kept America Free". See the attached document for more info on the event taking place on April 23 (0900-1200) at the Hopi Veterans Memorial Center

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