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## Office of Tribal Government Relations Newsletter ~ May/June 2015

### Note from the Director

As I write this, the summer season has finally arrived and I hope you're finding time to relax and enjoy the company of family, friends and life moving at a little slower pace. The past couple of months have been a time of transition for many, a time of reflecting on the milestones, memories and important sacrifices of the past while looking forward to new beginnings.

Here within VA's Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs (OPIA), we saw the departure of both OPIA Assistant Secretary Maura Sullivan, who left to take a post at the Department of Defense and Intergovernmental Affairs Deputy Assistant Secretary David Montoya, who returned to the private sector. We wish them both the very best in their next endeavors and thank them for their work on behalf of our Veterans. We also extend our best wishes to Mr. James Floyd, retiring Director of the Muskogee (OK) VA Medical Center. Mr. Floyd, a tribal member of the Muskogee (Creek) Nation, was dedicated throughout his career to building relationships with tribes in order to effectively serve the needs of Veterans living in Indian Country and actively led the effort to establish the VA Tribal Consultation Policy, which included establishing the VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations. Thank you, Mr. Floyd, for your leadership and years of service to our Veterans.

As for new beginnings the U.S. Senate confirmed President Obama's nomination of Dr. David J. Shulkin as VA's Under Secretary for Health. We look forward to welcoming Dr. Shulkin to VA and assisting tribal leadership, service providers and Veterans living in Indian Country with sharing information about the priorities, current efforts underway and continuing challenges to access that exist for our Veterans. We hope that these communications will result in increased and expanded collaborative partnerships between the Veterans Health Administration and tribal communities.

Our activities these past two months have been busy with outreach and education activities, some of which coincided with Memorial Day ceremonies. Our tribal government relations specialists facilitated presentations to Indian Health Boards in the Southern Plains and Southwest, and also assisted with coordinating Veterans benefits fairs within or near tribal communities. The Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe tribal leadership sponsored a Veterans benefits fair during June and also hosted a dinner honoring WW II Veterans. Peter Vicaire and I were honored to attend this event. Nate Nez, recently retired from the State of Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs who served Veterans living in Indian Country for many years was also honored during the dinner. We wish Nate all the very best in his retirement and ask him to keep in touch.

Summer is one of the busiest seasons for the OTGR team. What follows are a sample of some of the upcoming events and activities we'll be working on in the coming weeks: June 29, 2015: National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Mid-Year Meeting - St. Paul, MN. Peter Vicaire, OTGR Central/Northeast Regions, along with other VA colleagues, will attend and present information at NCAI's Mid-Year Veterans Committee meeting being held on June 29. 4:15-6:15, St. Paul River Centre

July 7, 2015: Town Hall Meeting – Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Warm Springs, OR. Terry Bentley, OTGR Western Region is accompanying senior leaders from VHA Portland, OR and VBA Portland Regional Office for a Town Hall Meeting with Veterans, family members and survivors during July 7, 2015 on the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs reservation. 1:00 PM; Veterans Hall, Warm Springs, OR

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July 7, 2015: California Rural Indian Health Board, Quarterly Board of Director's Meeting – Thunder Valley Casino Resort, Lincoln, CA. Stephanie Birdwell, OTGR Director will provide a VA update focused on status of the Reimbursement Agreements between VA, IHS and Tribal Health Programs, the VA Choice Act program and VA's Office of Rural Health Initiatives.

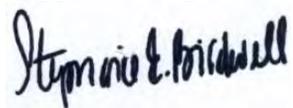
July 9-11, 2015: Native Veterans Summit, 3rd annual Gathering of Warriors – “Honoring Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans.” The event is being hosted by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and co-sponsored by the Native Wellness Institute and VA OTGR. The purpose of this gathering is to provide Veteran resources, benefits coordination and healthcare, opportunities for healing, networking and honoring our Veterans. The event has been planned as a mini-stand down. Other key VA senior officials are scheduled to attend from: VHA Portland, VBA Portland Regional Office, Salem Vet Center and the Oregon State Department of Veterans Affairs. Uyxat Powwow Grounds, Grand Ronde, OR

July 16, 2015: West River American Indian Veteran Advisory Council – Rosebud, SD. This meeting is attended by Tribal Veteran Service Officers (TVSOs) from North and South Dakota. VA updates and information will be shared with the TVSOs during this session.

July 30-31, 2015: Southern Plains Veterans Training Summit – Riverwind Casino and Resort, Norman, OK. Presentations and information will be shared by VA, federal, state and partner subject matter experts focused on updates and access to services and benefits for Veterans.

We look forward to catching up with you during our travels and along the way, don't hesitate to email us [tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov](mailto:tribalgovernmentconsultation@va.gov) with any questions or suggestions you may have about the work we do within VA or matters related to Veterans. If we don't have the answers, we'll work to connect you with those who do. This newsletter is a substantial one, we hope you find it informative and helpful.

Happy Reading,





*Stephanie Birdwell, Peter Vicaire and Nate Nez at a Veterans' benefit fair held at Lac Courte Oreilles, WI on June 4, 2015*

## Bahe Ketchum ~ Navajo Code Talker Dies



Here's an article by Charly Edsitty that ran in the [KPNX News](#) on June 8. There is also a video [:47] honoring Mr. Ketchum and his military service.

Ninety-six year old Bahe Ketchum, of Navajo Mountain, was about 18 or 19 years old when he was recruited into the Sixth Marine Division, unaware of how his role in World War II would shape the history of the United States. "I think down through the years he realized the impact of what he did," said Marvin Ketchum, Bahe's son and one of nine siblings. Bahe died in at the Flagstaff Regional Medical Center on Monday morning. His health deteriorated after breaking his leg weeks ago, which he underwent surgery to fix, but was too frail to fully recover.

His son, Jimmie Ketchum, said his father would share memories of his time serving in Iwo Jima and Guam. He described being on the front lines with bullets flying over his head and being assigned a body guard to ensure his safety, but also his demise if he were to be captured by the enemy. These details didn't come out until years after Bahe's service, a secret he slowly revealed to his family. "Stories would come out about the Navajo Code Talkers in the newspapers and even documentaries," Jimmie said. "And we've slowly pieced together, realizing how immense his duty was to his country."



Bahe Ketchum

In 2001, Bahe received the Congressional Silver Medal for his duty as a Navajo Code Talker and is one of about 400 Navajos who successfully transmitted secret military message in their native language that helped win the war. Bahe will be laid to rest on Saturday in the Navajo Mountain community on the Navajo Nation.

The Ketchum family has account #7626987585 set up with Wells Fargo for funeral expense donations.



## Story of a Fallen Warrior, Migizi and the Making of Ogitchidaa Kwe



### Story of a Fallen Warrior, Migizi and the Making of Ogitchidaa Kwe

Wab-Mishe-Ke Kwe ndizhinikaaz, my other name is Linda Woods and I am currently in retirement since 2008 from my lifelong career the helping professions as a social worker serving in many capacities for over 30 years. I earned my Master's degree in Social Work from San Jose State University in California 1994. I have a deep commitment to serving the Native American community and a deep passion to promote recovery and healthy lifestyle free from alcohol and illegal drugs.

I served in the U.S. Air Force 1962-1966 and was honorably discharged. I am a member of the Eagletown American Legion Post 120 for ten years since its inception in my community in Peshawbestown.

I am an Anishnabe Kwe traditional dancer since the 1980's and have always been included into the Sacred Circle of the pow-wow with my fellow veterans and treated with respect. I pondered for years, however why it was that the female veterans did not have their own Eagle Staff. I have had the honor of carrying flags and Eagle Staffs at Grand Entry or in a parade with my Eagletown American Legion Post 120 for many years.

In February of 2008 an eagle fell from the sky during an ice blizzard near Cheboygan, Michigan. Three weeks passed before three men went out to search for this "fallen warrior" (as we refer to an eagle or an eagle feather that has fallen). They found this eagle in the frozen ice of Black River. A combat veteran performed a sacred ceremony on the ice before they brought the eagle out of the ice. They used a chain saw to cut around the eagle which was about a 5' block of ice, the eagle was beautifully preserved.

A friend of mine had the eagle head but he knew he needed to pass the eagle on to a veteran and pondered who to give it to. After prayer and consulting others he decided he would offer it to me.



In 2011 this Spiritual Gift, this beautiful eagle head was presented to me in a sacred ceremony as the men shared the story of this eagle. I described my intentions to create a staff for women veterans, a healing staff. With the help of many people, veterans, non-veterans, male veterans and other female veterans an eagle staff was created in 2012.

In August, 2012, I brought *Ogitchidaa Kwe Migizi* Staff as a healing staff into my community at our traditional jingtamok (pow-wow). Again, these men supported me through this ceremony as *Ogitchidaa Kwe* came into the Sacred Circle. I am guided by a prominent veteran as he mentors me as I learn about taking care of an eagle staff. I have much to learn yet.

Today, I take care of *Ogitchidaa Kwe Migizi* Staff for women veterans and all women. Thus far, she has thirty-five feathers on her, which came to me from many people for many purposes; for the women who have died serving our nation (Lori Piestewa), for those who suffer from PTSD, abuse of all forms, addiction, including sexual abuse, one feather represents the two-spirit (gay, lesbian, transgender) women, a feather for those suffering from cancer, feathers from a woman who has adopted six boys with FAS/FAE, there are feathers to represent recovery, AA and the Red Road, and there are two distinct red feathers that represent our woundedness and white feathers to represent our healing.

I am an Odawa woman, Anishinaabe Kwe, enrolled in the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa & Chippewa Indians in Michigan. I am a mother of two sons, proud grandmother of five, and one great-grandson and an elder.





## Final Resting Place Coming for Apsaalooke Warriors

Here's an article that ran in the [Billings Gazette](#) on May 25, 2015.



Last December, descendants of four Crow Code Talkers received Congressional Gold Medals, the highest award Congress can bestow. The medals honored the heroism of Crow soldiers who used the tribal language in Allied military intelligence operations in World War II. The Code Talkers are credited with saving many lives.

“These young men transmitted secret coded messages using their language, which was so unique that the code could not be broken by enemy forces,” Sen. Jon Tester said at the medal presentation. “That unbreakable code and the spirit of the Code Talkers live on today in the language and culture of the Crow Nation.”

Despite their strong legacy of military service, the Crow don't have a cemetery designated for their U.S. military veterans. That's about to change, thanks to years of effort by tribal members and a \$1.2 million grant awarded last month by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The Apsaalooke Warriors Cemetery is expected to go from planning to construction next month, according to Paul Little Light, Crow Tribe veterans affairs director. The new veterans' cemetery will be constructed on the west edge of Crow Agency, adjoining the community cemetery and just down the road from a new veterans housing project.

Among 13,000 Crow tribal members, about 430 are U.S. military veterans, Little Light said. The cemetery plan estimates that 240 Crow veterans will die over the next 10 years. “It is the wish of the Crow Tribe to provide a place to honor the veterans that have served in all branches of the military in a local, culturally relevant location,” the plan says. The cemetery will help the national veterans cemetery administration move toward its goal of having a cemetery within 75 miles of 90 percent of U.S. veterans. The veterans' cemetery at Little Bighorn Battlefield is full, and the next closest veterans cemeteries are in Sheridan, Wyo., and the Yellowstone National Cemetery north of Laurel.

The tribe set aside a 40-acre tract for the cemetery. The VA grant will help develop the first portion of the cemetery to accommodate burials for the next 10 years. “Native Americans serve in our nation's military at a higher rate than any other group, and we must continue to honor their sacrifice even after they're gone,” Tester said last month in announcing the grant.

This cemetery project started in June 2013 with support from Crow Tribal Chairman Darrin Old Coyote, Secretary Alvin “A.J.” Not Afraid, and Vice Secretary Shawn Backbone and others. Little Light wrote the grant proposal. A&E Architects and Land Design Inc., both of Billings, and 7 Directions of Seattle created the master plan. Walking River Inc., a Native American-owned business in Columbus, is the

construction contractor. Little Light hopes construction will start next month so that the work can be recognized during Native Days on the third weekend of June at Crow Agency. Construction should take several months, he said.

The cemetery will be fenced and irrigated with water from an existing tower near the site. The tribe is required to match 10 percent of the VA grant. "It would bring them honor to have (a) final resting place that's designated for veterans, and it brings pride into the community; and yes, we need it," said Little Light, who served with the U.S. Army in Bosnia. Little Light hopes that eventually the cemetery can become a national cemetery, as the Yellowstone County Veterans Cemetery recently was designated the Yellowstone National Cemetery. He credited tribal leadership and his staff in the tribal veterans affairs office for moving the cemetery project forward to this point. He also commended the work done by the design architects and engineers. Last year, Congress honored the heroism of Code Talkers Barney Old Coyote, Henry Old Coyote, Samson Birdinground and Cyril Notafraid. This year, a new cemetery will honor all Crow veterans.

## Native Veteran/Counseling Psychology Student Seeks Assistance in PTSD Research



See below for a letter from Greg Urquhart, Cherokee veteran and graduate student in Counseling Psychology.

"Dear Tribal Representative, I am a Cherokee Veteran of Iraq and current graduate student (Counseling Psychology Program), who is carrying out a survey on Native American veterans, and their perceptions of and attitudes towards Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. This survey has met exemption criteria from Washington State University's Institutional Review Board. It is my belief that if we as Native people speak as a group through this survey, places that provide veteran services for PTSD like the V.A. and I.H.S. will listen and will add our suggestions and preferences for treatment/healing to programs intended to help Native Veterans. I am asking for your assistance in spreading the word about our survey among the veterans in your tribe.

The survey is open to anyone who is Native American and who has served in the military. They do not need to have been deployed or to have PTSD to participate in the survey. Below is a letter with more information about the survey and a link to the online version of the survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/nativeveterans>). If you have additional forms you would like us to fill out such as tribal institutional review board paperwork, please let us know and we will be happy to do so. Also, if you would like us to send paper and pencil versions of our survey with self-addressed return envelopes to you, we will be happy to do that as well. Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Sincerely, Greg Urquhart - [greg.urquhart@wsu.edu](mailto:greg.urquhart@wsu.edu) - [509-335-8677](tel:509-335-8677)



## Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation and Department of Veterans Affairs Signing Ceremony and Veterans Benefits Fair



On May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015, leaders of the Prairie Band of Potawatomi Nation (PBPN) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) so that eligible Native American Veterans and their spouses will have the opportunity to use their VA home loan benefit on Federal trust land. The Native American Direct Loan (NADL) Program provides direct home loans from VA to eligible Native American Veterans to finance the purchase, construction, or improvement of homes on Federal Trust Land, or to refinance a prior NADL to reduce the interest rate.



Those in attendance at the Signing Ceremony were Tribal Council Chairperson Liana Onnen, Vice-Chairperson Joyce Guerrero, Secretary Camilla Chouteau, Treasurer Hattie Mitchell, and Members Warren "Jr." Wahweotten and Carrie O'Toole; PBPN Veteran Rey Kitchkumme, who provided the Veteran perspective in the MOU negotiations and who will be first to take advantage of this home loan opportunity on PBPN trust land; Tribal attorney Marzha Fritzler; Mike Frueh, Director of VBA's Loan Guaranty Service; Kimberly Girard, VBA Loan Specialist, St. Paul; Stacey Bonnet, Acting Director, VBA, Wichita Regional Office; and Rudy Klopfer, Director VA Eastern Kansas Health Care System (VAEKHCS), among others. Invited but unable to attend were Kansas Congressional Representatives; the Kansas Native American Affairs Office staff; and the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office.



## Spirit Lake Vet Receives Purple Heart 61 Years After Leaving the Army

Here's an article by Andrew Ladwig that ran in the [WDAZ News](#) on June 13. There is also a video [:25] honoring Mr. Shaw's service.

Spirit Lake Nation (WDAZ TV) - An oversight has been corrected. More than 60 years later, a veteran on the Spirit Lake Nation gets the recognition he deserves. 85-year-old Andy Shaw is a spiritual leader on the Spirit Lake Nation, and the patriarch of a proud family. Kara Shaw/Granddaughter: "He is a very strong man, and he keeps the family together." Now, his family has another reason to be proud. The Korean War veteran was honored with a Purple Heart, 61 years after he left the army. Sen. Heidi Heitkamp/(D) North Dakota: "When you can right this wrong, it's a good day."

Shaw was on the front lines when North Korea invaded South Korea. He was hit by shrapnel, captured, and spent more than three years in concentration camps. A fellow veteran says Shaw saved his life in captivity by carrying him when he couldn't walk. Weakened prisoners were shot on sight.

Heitkamp adds, "He's an amazing guy, and the more you talk to people, the more you realize what he sacrificed." Senator Heidi Heitkamp's office and the VA were instrumental in getting Shaw his medal. Heitkamp's staff scoured the country looking for a fellow soldier who could verify Shaw's service record. She says, "Found this gentleman in Texas in the nursing home who could sign the affidavit."

Soldiers, veterans, family, and community members joined together to honor his courage. Alex Shaw/Granddaughter: "I love to see all everybody come together and celebrate that he finally got his award." Andy Shaw didn't want to comment on receiving his Purple Heart. He said he's too shy. But as Senator Heidi Heitkamp says, you don't need to talk to him to know how he was feeling on his special day.

She adds, "The joy that I felt when we handed him his purple heart and I said 'Do you want me to hold it while people shake the hands?' He was having none of that." Alex Shaw says, "You could just see the happiness on his face. Brought me to tears to finally see this happen for him." Shaw fought for his country at a time when laws prevented Native Americans from having basic rights.

Heitkamp says, "They served their country at a time when they couldn't vote. People don't appreciate or understand that." Things have changed in the last 61 years...including finally recognizing the sacrifices of a proud American. Kara Shaw says, "It's very heartwarming knowing there's a lot out there that support our grandpa and are also proud of him as much as we are proud of him." Alex Shaw adds, "Long time coming, you know. "



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY  
U.S. Department  
of the Interior

[www.doi.gov](http://www.doi.gov)

## News Release

### Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
June 16, 2015

CONTACT: Nedra Darling  
202-219-4152

### **Assistant Secretary Washburn Says Indian Affairs Has Exceeded Its Goal to Increase the Number of Native Vet Hires**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs Kevin K. Washburn today announced that Indian Affairs offices and bureaus have hired nearly 600 American Indian and Alaska Native veterans in Fiscal Year 2015, exceeding the goal set last year to increase the number of Native American veterans employed by these agencies from nine percent of the workforce to 12.5 percent.

“Our intent to build a 21<sup>st</sup> century Indian Affairs workforce depends upon attracting and retaining experienced and motivated personnel, and we know that America’s veterans are among the most capable, dedicated and well-trained individuals we need,” Washburn said. “I am very proud that we have not only met, but exceeded our goal of hiring American Indian and Alaska Native vets. We will continue to provide those veterans with opportunities to use their knowledge and skills in our mission of serving Indian Country.”

On June 14, 2014, Washburn announced the launch of a new initiative to hire more American Indian and Alaska Native veterans throughout Indian Affairs, which includes the Office of the Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs (OAS-IA), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE). The initiative targets veterans prior to their discharge from the U.S. Armed Forces and actively seeks members of the National Guard and reserves who are looking for careers that serve Indian Country.

Indian Affairs bureaus, regional offices and agencies provide a wide range of direct services to 566 federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and thousands of Indian trust beneficiaries. Almost all Indian Affairs positions are filled with American Indians and Alaska Natives under a congressionally approved Indian Preference policy.

In total, Indian Affairs employees number approximately 7,940. They work throughout the United States not just with tribes, but also with state, local and other federal agencies in matters

-Continued-



## Page 2 – Native Veterans

ranging from public safety, family and child welfare, and education to infrastructure maintenance, environmental protection, land and natural resources management, and other areas.

Two of those hired within the past year are decorated veterans William Wolf Tail, a member of the Blackfeet Tribe, who is a correctional officer with a BIA Office of Justice Services (OJS) facility in Browning, Mont., and Damar Dore, a member of the Passamaquoddy Tribe-Pleasant Point in Maine, who joined the BIA as a supervisory information technology specialist in Aberdeen, S.D.

Despite his many accomplishments and experiences during his military career, Wolf Tail deems one event as holding particular significance for him: “My most fond moment would be graduating from the basic corrections officer training program at the BIA’s Indian Police Academy.” He is looking forward to continuing his professional growth with OJS.

“I took the position with the BIA to continue service by serving Native American communities,” said Dore, who, like Wolf Tail, has many years of military experience. “I spent the first portion of my life protecting the freedoms that all Americans enjoy, and now it is time to use this knowledge to help protect indigenous freedoms. The oath we take as military members is to protect all from foreign and domestic threats, and I intend on continuing to uphold my oath by providing solutions that have value to the agency and have a positive return on investment.”

For more information about Indian Affairs’ Hire American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans Initiative, visit [www.bia.gov/Jobs/Veterans/](http://www.bia.gov/Jobs/Veterans/) or call Nancy Nelson, Human Resources Specialist, Indian Affairs Office of Human Capital Management, at 202-208-6175.

The Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs assists and supports the Secretary of the Interior in fulfilling the United States’ trust responsibility to the federally recognized tribes and individual Indian trust beneficiaries. The Office of Human Capital Management (OHCM) over sees human resources management, policy and operations for the OAS-IA, BIA and BIE. OHCM reports to the Deputy Assistant Secretary Indian Affairs – Management within the OAS-IA.

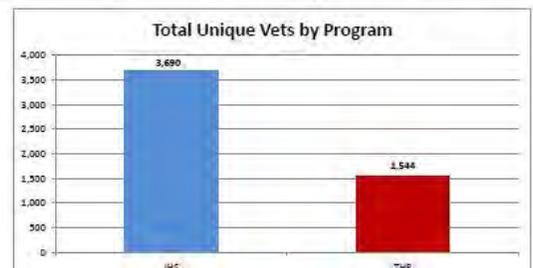
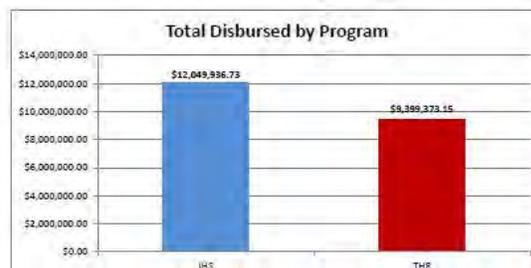
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## VA/Tribal Health/IHS Reimbursement Program Reimburses \$21.5 Million

Tribal health clinics interested in entering into a Reimbursement Agreement with VA for serving veterans should send an initial note of interest to:  
[tribal.agreements@va.gov](mailto:tribal.agreements@va.gov)

National Data				
Total Disbursement for entire IHS/THP Program - Agmt Date to FYTD	Total Disbursement by Program - Agmt Date to FYTD			Total Unique Veterans for entire IHS/THP Program - Agmt Date to FYTD
\$21,449,309.88	Program	Total Disbursed	Total Unique Vets	5,198
	IHS	\$12,049,936.73	3,690	
	THP	\$9,399,373.15	1,544	
Total Disbursement - Out of System Retirements (only)	Total Disbursement of Out of System Retirements (only) - <i>payments are included in above totals</i>			Total Unique Veterans - Out of System Retirements (only)
\$7,535.00	Program	Total Disbursed	Total Unique Vets	258
	IHS	\$3,228.00	175	
	THP	\$4,307.00	83	



## VA Releases New Report: Native American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans – 2013 American Community Survey

This report uses data from the 2013 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample to report data concerning the demographics, socioeconomic status, and health characteristics of AIAN Servicemembers and Veterans.

It can be found on the VA website [HERE](http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/AIANReport2015.pdf).  
<http://www.va.gov/vetdata/docs/SpecialReports/AIANReport2015.pdf>



## **\$35 Million in job training grants will help 16,000+ veterans overcome homelessness and secure employment – 2 tribes receive funding**

WASHINGTON — U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez announced today the award of more than \$35 million in grants to provide an estimated 16,000 veterans with job-driven training for in-demand jobs to help them successfully transition from homelessness to sustainable housing and good civilian jobs. "In cities like Salt Lake City, Houston and Phoenix, through partnerships and the aggressive delivery of supportive services, we have shown that veteran homelessness is not a reality we have to accept," said U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas E. Perez. "The Homeless Veteran Reintegration Program has proven time and again that it can be effective in helping veterans overcome obstacles to employment and sustainable housing, and they deserve nothing less."

The [Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program](#) is awarding funds competitively to state and local workforce investment boards, local public agencies and nonprofit organizations, and tribal governments, including faith-based and community organizations. Homeless veterans may receive occupational, classroom and on-the-job training, as well as job search and placement assistance, including follow-up services. HVRP is the only federal program that focuses exclusively on employment of veterans who are homeless. Grantees in the HVRP program network coordinate their efforts with various local, state and federal social service providers. To learn more about the U.S. Department of Labor's unemployment and re-employment programs for veterans, visit [www.dol.gov/vets](http://www.dol.gov/vets). For more information on this grant announcement, please contact the department's Cassandra Mitchell at 202-693-4589.

Two tribes have received grants from the [Homeless Veterans' Reintegration Program](#) at the [Department of Labor](#).

The [Standing Rock Sioux Tribe](#) of North Dakota and South Dakota received \$200,000 and the [Nez Perce Tribe](#) of Idaho received \$154,356. The money will help address homelessness among veterans and assist them with job training.

Additionally, Goodwill Industries in New Mexico received a \$250,136 grant. Some of the money will be used for Native veterans.



## VA Hires New Native American Social Work Substance Use Disorder Specialist

Dino Haley serves the Phoenix VA Health Care System as a Social Work Substance Use Disorder Specialist working in the HUD VASH sector. Dino originates from the Dine' Nation and provides ceremonial healing practice to the community he serves. Dino is a faculty associate at Arizona State University. Dino completed a graduate research study concluding the preference for Native American military veterans benefiting from ceremonial healing services treating mental health disorders. Dino provides proficient methods of dual-diagnosis disorder treatment using Native American philosophy and ceremonial practice.



*Dino Haley*

He is currently completing a two-part research that addresses cultural relevance with Native American military veterans. Dino served as an independent research contractor with Arizona State University Center of Applied Behavioral Health Policy and assisted in the study of the Native American population exposed to HIV/AIDS and substance use. Dino served three years as an Arizona judicial probation officer advocating for improved outcomes by identifying the cultural heritage of Northern Arizona.

He utilizes Native American philosophy and knowledge of addiction therapy to bring a unique approach to wellness. He incorporates the sacred fundamental relationship with *nature and the universe* to the behavioral health science to influence a greater understanding of Native American ceremonial philosophy.



## The Impact of Demographic Differences on Native Veterans' Outpatient Service Utilization

Here's an abstract from an article concerning Native Veterans. It can be purchased in its entirety from the [American Psychological Association](#)

“Many Native veterans-including American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders (NHPI)-have served in the United States Armed Forces. Most of these veterans are eligible for medical care from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), but research examining the determinants of their service use is needed to inform policy and allocate appropriate resources for these unique groups.

In a retrospective cohort study, we examined the impact of Native veterans' personal demographics on their outpatient utilization of VA-based primary care and mental health services. AIAN (n = 37,687) and NHPI (n = 46,582) veterans were compared with a non-Native reference (N = 262,212) using logistic and binomial regression. AIAN and NHPIs were more likely to be female, report military sexual trauma, and utilize the VA for posttraumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, depression, addiction, anxiety, hypertension, and diabetes care.

More AIAN and urban NHPI veterans served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and Native women reported more military sexual trauma than their non-Native counterparts. Primary care and mental health services were associated with race, number of diagnoses, and disability ratings. For mental health services, service era, military sexual trauma, and marital status were related to service utilization. Native veterans' medical need was elevated for primary and mental health care. Rural residence was associated with less mental health use.

The findings underscore the need for additional specialized services in rural areas, more targeted outreach to Operation Enduring Freedom/Operation Iraqi Freedom Native veterans, and additional care directed toward Native women's health care needs.”



## Ho-Chunk Nation Ramps up Veterans Assistance

Here's an article by Cassandra Colson that originally ran online on June 24 in the [Jackson County Chronicle](#)

Marine Corps veteran Scott Kingswan couldn't keep up with rent and bills while living in Madison after his military service. Kingswan, in the service from 1986 to 1990, was working after serving as a motor vehicle operator at Camp Lejeune, N.C., but began looking at other options as financial struggles increased. Eventually, he was told about the Ho-Chunk Veterans Supportive Housing Project, a program that provides apartments to veterans who are homeless or who are in danger of becoming homeless.

Kingswan applied and became the first resident of the Black River Falls-area facility at W8699 Sandpillow Rd., which officially was completed last month. "I couldn't keep up with life (in Madison)," Kingswan said. "Right now, I'm just enjoying some stability in my life." The \$1.5 million, 11,000-square-foot apartment building has been many years in the making and is hoped to start a movement toward its type of housing and services in Native American and non-native communities alike, officials said at a ribbon-cutting ceremony last week. "I'm really proud to be here," said John Scocos, secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs. "(This) is a tremendous thing to do, and this is going to be a model for the future."

The Ho-Chunk facility houses 10 apartments for veterans who also can participate in assistance programs like health care and mental health counseling and financial and life skills training. This type of supportive housing, also commonly known as transitional housing, doesn't require veterans meet criteria other than being Ho-Chunk Nation veterans who have an active duty discharge form. They can stay for as long as necessary as long as they pay rent and follow the facility's guidelines.

The philosophy is to provide housing first and then look for other ways to assist veterans with the overarching goal of giving back to those who have served, officials said. "We're going to put a roof over their heads and the rest will follow," said Neil Whitegull, executive director of the Ho-Chunk Housing and Community Development Agency, which helped spearhead the project. "That was kind of our motivation. "Serving those who served us."

Whitegull said the project had broad Ho-Chunk Nation support in governmental branches and other agencies, and a legislature motion set aside money for the project, which is mostly funded through tribal dollars but also

received some money for program development from a non-profit organization. Surveys indicated there are anywhere from 90 to 200 Ho-Chunk Nation veterans who fit the criteria of being homeless or are in danger of being homeless, a figure that comes amid a strong history of military service by the tribe's members.

Ho-Chunk Nation President Jon Greendeer noted the historic nature of the project at the ribbon-cutting ceremony and also credited a variety of elected and other officials for their contributions to pushing the project forward and their "shared goal" of assisting those who serve. Today is obviously a very important and historic day," Greendeer said. "This is a very, very important event. This is probably one of the most important things the Ho-Chunk Nation has done in the past 10 years. "We are blazing a lot of trails ..."

Last week's event included remarks from Robert Mann in the Ho-Chunk language, and members of the Andrew Blackhawk American Legion Post 129 raised the Ho-Chunk, U.S. and Prisoners of War flags for the first time at the site. A drum group also sang Ho-Chunk flag songs for the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines. Scocos also presented Greendeer, outgoing Ho-Chunk president, with a certificate of recognition for his support of military veterans.

## National Gathering of American Indian Veterans




*National Gathering of  
American Indian Veterans*

American Indian Veterans Celebration  
**Saturday, August 29, 2015**  
11 am to 10 pm

Breakfast and Conference  
**Sunday, August 30, 2015**  
9 am to 12 noon

to be held at  
**Cantigny Park**  
18151 Winfield Road | Wheaton, IL 60189

Visit [trickstergallery.com/native-veterans](http://trickstergallery.com/native-veterans) for further info.  
Contact [UntoldStory2015@TricksterGallery.com](mailto:UntoldStory2015@TricksterGallery.com)  
for Native Veteran interview scheduling.

*Save the Date*

marguerite casey foundation  
change is possible  
TRICKSTER ART GALLERY

The Robert R. McCormick Foundation and Cantigny Park welcome the Trickster Art Gallery to the First Division Museum and are proud to support Native American veterans.

ROBERT R. MCCORMICK FOUNDATION  
85 YEARS  
CANTIGNY PARK

THE ROBERT R. MCCORMICK FOUNDATION IS COMMITTED TO FOSTERING COMMUNITIES OF EDUCATED, INFORMED AND ENGAGED CITIZENS.



Q and A with SSA for May

By Kirk Larson  
Social Security Western Washington Public Affairs Specialist

#### QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Question:**

What is the maximum Social Security retirement benefit?

**Answer:**

The maximum benefit depends on the age you retire. For example, if you retire at full retirement age in 2015, your maximum monthly benefit would be \$2,663. However, if you retire at age 62 in 2015, your maximum monthly benefit would be only \$2,025. If you retire at age 70 in 2015, your maximum monthly benefit would be \$3,501. To get a better idea of what your benefit might be, visit our online *Retirement Estimator* at [www.socialsecurity.gov/retire/estimator.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/retire/estimator.html).

**Question:**

My same-sex partner and I recently married. Will we qualify for Social Security benefits?

**Answer:**

You may be eligible to apply for Social Security benefits. Many factors affect your eligibility for benefits, including how long you worked and your age. Social Security is now processing more claims in which entitlement or eligibility is affected by a same-sex relationship. We encourage you to apply for benefits right away, even if you aren't sure you're eligible. Applying now will protect you against the loss of any potential benefits. You can apply safely and securely at [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyonline). Learn more about Social Security for same-sex couples by visiting [www.socialsecurity.gov/same-sexcouples](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/same-sexcouples).

**Question:**

I'm planning my retirement. What is the maximum Social Security benefit I might receive?

**Answer:**

The maximum benefit depends on the age you retire and how much you earned in your lifetime. For example, if you retire at age 62 in 2015, your maximum benefit will be \$2,025. If you retire at full retirement age in 2015, your maximum benefit will be \$2,663. If you retire at age 70 in 2015, your maximum benefit will be \$3,501. You can estimate your benefits by using our *Retirement Estimator* at [www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/estimator).

**Question:**

I was hurt on the job and can't work. How do I start my application for Social Security disability benefits?



**Answer:**

If you have a disability that qualifies, you can apply online at [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability). There are several advantages to applying online for disability benefits. You can start your disability claim immediately. There is no need to wait for an appointment. You can apply from the convenience of your home or on any computer. And, you avoid trips to a Social Security office, saving you time and money. You can use the online application to apply for benefits if you are age 18 or older, have a medical condition that has prevented you from working or is expected to prevent you from working for at least 12 months or result in death, and reside in the United States or one of its territories or commonwealths.

**Question:**

I will rely on Medicare when I retire. Can you explain the different parts of Medicare?

**Answer:**

The different parts of Medicare cover your specific needs. There are four parts, all of which work in tandem to deliver healthcare services.

- Part A (hospital insurance): Hospital insurance helps pay for inpatient care in a hospital or skilled nursing facility (following a hospital stay), some home health care, and hospice care.
- Part B (medical insurance): Medical insurance helps pay for doctors' services and many other medical services and supplies that hospital insurance doesn't cover.
- Part C (Medicare Advantage plans): If you have Medicare Parts A and B, you can join a Medicare Advantage plan. Private companies offer Medicare Advantage plans which are approved by Medicare. These plans generally help you pay the medical costs not covered by Medicare Part A and B.
- Part D (prescription drug coverage): Prescription drug coverage helps pay for medications doctors prescribe for treatment.

**Question:**

How do I know if I meet the eligibility requirements to get Social Security disability benefits?

**Answer:**

To qualify for Social Security disability benefits, you must have worked long enough in jobs covered by Social Security (usually 10 years). You must also have a medical condition that meets Social Security's strict definition of disability. We consider an adult disabled under our rules if he or she has a medical condition, or combination of medical conditions, that are expected to last for at least one year or result in death, and that prevent the performance of any type of work.

If you think you may be eligible to receive disability benefits and would like to apply, you can use our online application at [www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/applyfordisability).



## OTGR Western Region

(AK; CA; ID; NV; OR; WA)

# NATIVE VETERANS SUMMIT

## 3rd Annual Gathering of Warriors

### July 10 - 11, 2015

"Honoring Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans"

Connecting Veterans with services

### All Veterans Welcome

Hosted by





In Grand Ronde, OR @ Uyxat Powwow Grounds  
9390 Highway 22  
Grand Ronde, OR 97347

**Kid and Family Activities!**



FREE EVENT!

## NATIVE VETERANS SUMMIT

### 3rd Annual Gathering of Warriors

followed by the  
Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow July 10-12

**Lodging**  
Spirit Mountain Casino Resort  
27100 SW Salmon River Hwy  
Grand Ronde, OR 97347  
Phone: 503-879-2350  
Toll-Free: 800-760-7977  
[www.spiritmountain.com](http://www.spiritmountain.com)



July 9 from 1-4 Gathering of Tribal Leaders/Health Directors for listening session on Veterans Health Care, Hosted by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.

All meals will be provided.  
Please help us recruit Veterans by sharing this brochure with them, and by providing transportation or other assistance to attend. If you or your program are interested in sponsoring the gathering financially, please contact NWI

For more information and to register online visit our website at [www.NativeWellness.com](http://www.NativeWellness.com) or email us at [info@nativewellness.com](mailto:info@nativewellness.com). Contact Dave Fullerton 503-879-2036 or [dave.fullerton@grandronde.org](mailto:dave.fullerton@grandronde.org)



**The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon**

Tribal Council  
Phone (503) 879-2301  
1-800 422-0232  
Fax (503) 879-5964

9615 Grand Ronde Rd  
Grand Ronde, OR 97347

June 9, 2015

Re: Third Annual Veterans Summit Invitation

Dear Tribal Leaders:

On behalf of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, I would like to cordially invite you to attend the Third Annual Veterans Summit to be held July 9-10 at Uyxat Powwow Grounds in Grand Ronde, Oregon. The theme for this year is "Honoring Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans." The summit's purpose is to provide resources, benefits coordination, health care, opportunities for healing and networking for veterans, as well as honor our veterans and their families for their service to our country.

As you are probably aware, there is an ongoing concern that veterans lack timely and convenient access to health care. The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde has entered into an agreement with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to be able to serve veterans through our Tribal health clinic. We would like to share this model with other Tribes. From 3 to 5 p.m. Thursday, July 9, there will be a panel workshop and open forum on Tribal health clinics providing care for veterans that will cover opportunities for reimbursement through the VA. This workshop will be immediately followed by a reception at Uyxat Powwow Grounds.

The summit will be followed by our annual Marcellus Norwest Memorial Veterans Powwow, running Friday through Sunday, July 10-12, which provides a continued opportunity to honor veterans.

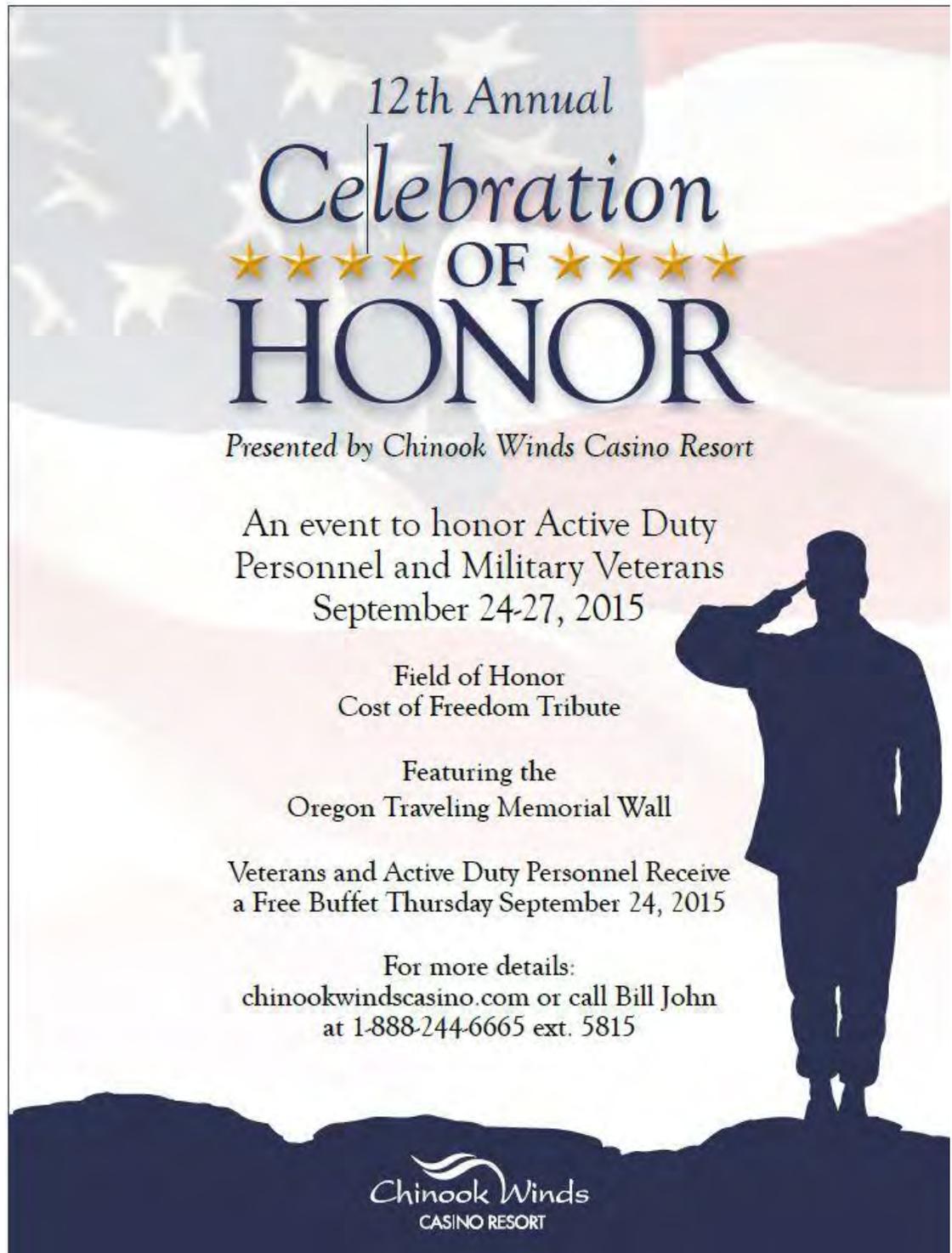
We would be honored to have you attend. Please contact me with any questions. For additional information, contact David Fullerton at 503-879-2036 or register at [www.NativeWellness.com](http://www.NativeWellness.com).

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Reynold L. Leno in cursive.

Reynold L. Leno  
Tribal Council Chairman  
Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde

*Umpqua Molalla Rogue River Kalapuya Chasta*



12th Annual  
**Celebration**  
OF  
**HONOR**

*Presented by Chinook Winds Casino Resort*

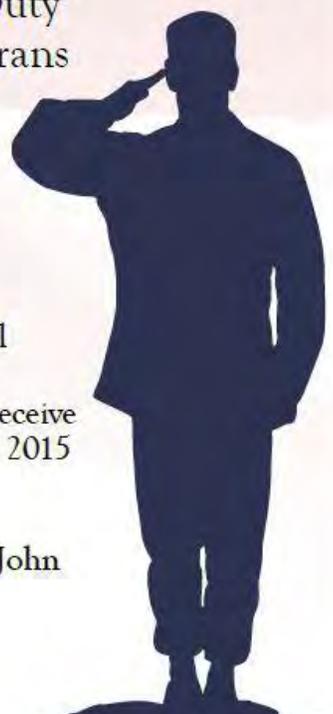
An event to honor Active Duty  
Personnel and Military Veterans  
September 24-27, 2015

Field of Honor  
Cost of Freedom Tribute

Featuring the  
Oregon Traveling Memorial Wall

Veterans and Active Duty Personnel Receive  
a Free Buffet Thursday September 24, 2015

For more details:  
[chinookwindscasino.com](http://chinookwindscasino.com) or call Bill John  
at 1-888-244-6665 ext. 5815



Chinook Winds  
CASINO RESORT



**Tribal Veteran Representative (TVR) Training**  
**September 22-24, 2015**  
**Oregon State Department of Veterans Affairs (Salem Location)**  
**700 Summer St. NE, Salem, OR**  
**DRAFT AGENDA**

**Tuesday, September 22, 2015**

8:00am – 8:30am	<b>Coffee/Tea/Pastries/Fruit - Networking</b>
8:30am – 9:15am	<b>Opening Ceremonies</b> Moderator: Mitch Sparks & Terry Bentley Post Colors – Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde (CTGR) Color Guard Invocation – Steve Bobb, Chairman, Veterans Committee CTGR
9:15am – 9:30am	<b>Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs Update</b> – Cameron Smith, Director
9:30am – 10:00am	<b>Portland VA Medical Center Update</b> – Joanne Krumberger, Director
10:00am – 10:30am	<b>Introductions/Overview/Goals for Training</b> – Terry Bentley / Mitch Sparks
10:30am-11:30am	<b>Veteran Service Officer Basics</b> – Mitch Sparks - VSO Responsibilities - VA Law 101 - VA Structure Overview
11:30am-12:30pm	<b>Lunch – on your own</b>
12:30pm-1:30pm	<b>Resume VA Services Service Officer Basics</b> – Mitch Sparks - Veteran Status - Types of Discharges - Discharge Upgrades and VA Character of Service Inquiries
1:30-1:45pm	<b>Break</b>
1:45pm -2:45pm	<b>Resume VA Service Officer Basics</b> – Mitch Sparks - Health Insurance Portability & Accountability Act (HIPAA) - Power of Attorney
2:45pm-3:00pm	<b>Break</b>
3:00pm-4:00pm	<b>Role Playing – VA Benefits &amp; Services</b>
4:00pm	<b>Adjourn for Day</b>



**Tribal Veteran Representative (TVR) Training**  
**September 22-24, 2015**  
**Oregon State Department of Veterans Affairs (Salem Location)**  
**700 Summer St, NE, Salem, OR**  
**DRAFT AGENDA**

**Wednesday, September 23, 2015**

8:30am-9:00am	<b>Coffee/Tea/Pastries/Fruit - Networking</b>
9:00am – 10:00am	<b>SAMSHA &amp; Tribal Behavioral Health</b> – David Dickinson, Regional Administrator, Substance Abuse & Mental Health Services (SAMSHA)
10:00am – 10:15am	<b>Break</b>
10:15am – 10:45am	<b>Native Procurement Technical Assistance Center (Native PTAC)</b> Kylene Binder-Peters, Program Manager
10:45am-12:00pm	<b>Service Connected Benefits – Mitch Sparks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Service Connected Disability Compensation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Direct</li> <li>o Secondary</li> <li>o Aggravation</li> <li>o Presumptive</li> <li>o 1151-Calculating Combined Ratings</li> <li>o Calculating Bilateral Factor in Combined Ratings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
12:00pm-1:00pm	<b>Lunch – on your own</b>
1:00pm-2:15pm	<b>Special Claims – Mitch Sparks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)</li> <li>o Hearing Loss</li> <li>o Individual Employability</li> <li>o Special Monthly Compensation</li> </ul>
2:15pm-2:30pm	<b>Break</b>
2:30pm-3:30pm	<b>Social Security Administration Benefits – Alan Edwards</b>
3:30pm-4:00pm	<b>Income Based Benefits – Mitch Sparks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Non-Service Connected Pension</li> <li>o Special Monthly Pension</li> </ul>
4:00pm	<b>Adjourn for Day</b>





Tribal Veteran Representative (TVR) Training  
September 22-24, 2015  
Oregon State Department of Veterans Affairs (Salem Location)  
700 Summer St. NE, Salem, OR  
DRAFT AGENDA

Thursday, September 24, 2015

8:30am-9:00am	Coffee/Tea/Pastries/Fruit - Networking
9:00am – 9:30am	Women Veteran Benefits – Nancy Sloan, Women Veterans Coordinator, VA Portland
9:30am – 10:15am	Portland VBA Regional Office Update - Kevin Kalama, Veterans Service Center Manager/Area West
10:15am – 10:30am	Break
10:30am-11:30pm	Education Benefits – Richard Breunissen, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, VA Portland Regional Office
11:30pm-12:30pm	Lunch – on your own
12:30pm-1:30pm	VA Healthcare – Mitch Sparks
1:30pm-1:45pm	Break
1:45pm-2:45pm	Survivor Benefits – Mitch Sparks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Dependency Indemnity Compensation</li> <li>○ Death (Survivors) Pension</li> <li>○ Accrued Benefits</li> <li>○ Substitution of Claimant</li> <li>○ Burial Benefits</li> </ul>
2:45pm-3:00pm	Break
3:00pm-3:45pm	Role Playing – Mitch Sparks
3:45pm-4:00pm	Training Certificates/Challenge Coins – Cameron Smith
4:00pm	Adjourn for Day / Safe Travels Home





*The*  
**Department of Veterans Affairs**  
**TOWN HALL MEETING** with *Veterans,*  
*Family Members, and Survivors*

*Hosted by Portland VA Regional Office Director and  
VA Portland Health Care System Director*

**WHO:** *Veterans, their families and Survivors, and any organization or individual who works with or on behalf of Veterans*

**WHAT:** *Town Hall Meeting*

**WHERE:** *Veterans Hall, 1191 Hollywood, Warm Springs, OR*

**WHEN:** *Tuesday, July 7, 2015 at 1pm*

**WHY:** *To share information, hear feedback, and answer questions on VA health care and benefits, including compensation, pension, insurance, loan guaranty, vocational rehabilitation and employment, and education benefit program. We will have claims specialists available to answer claims-specific questions.*

*We welcome our community partners, stakeholders, representatives from Congress, state legislature, local government, Veterans Service Organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations to participate in these town-halls.*



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs

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## OTGR Southwest Region

(AZ; CO; NM; UT)



# O'ODHAM VETERANS CELEBRATION SAVE THE DATE

### August 15, 2015

Salt River Pima Maricopa Indian Community  
Salt River Community Building  
1880 N. Longmore Rd. Scottsdale, AZ 85256  
Contact Pacer at 480-362-7490 or pacer.reina@srpmic-nsn.gov

### August 29, 2015

White Mountain Apache  
312 N Chief Avenue  
Whiteriver, AZ 85941  
Contact Dennis at 928-338-6090 / denisfaden@wmat.us

### September 12, 2015

Gila River Indian Community  
Blackwater District 1/ Multi-Purpose Bldg.  
15747 N. Shegoi Road, Coolidge AZ 85128  
Contact Doug at 602-327-5973 / djuan-vsv@gmail.com

### September 26, 2015

Tohono Odham Nation  
Desert Diamond Casino  
1100 W Pima Mine Rd, Sahuarita, AZ  
Contact Ron at 520-383-1900/ronald.homewytewa@tonation-nsn.gov

### October 10, 2015

Solomon, AZ  
Lopez—Hernandez American Legion Post #95  
2256 S. 3rd Ave Solomon, AZ 85551  
Contact Hal at 928-235-1980/halherbert8@gmail.com  
Ray at 928-965-0785/reajpac@hotmail.com



## 2015 Navajo-Hopi Honor Riders Stop at Hopi

Despite a breezy day, the Navajo-Hopi Honor Riders stopped at the Second Mesa Cultural Center on Tuesday, May 12, 2015, as they made their way across Navajo and Hopi Country in support of Veterans, Military Members and Blue and Gold Star Moms. Over 200 members of the group made the annual visit to Hopi with well over 80 motorcycles and support vehicles.

Highlighting the arrival was the forming of a special honor guard comprised of over 90 Pinion High School JROTC Army cadets who lined both sides of AZ Highway 264 as the Riders passed in review before parking at the Cultural Center. Welcoming the Riders was Phillip Quochytewa, Vice Commander, Lori Piestewa Post #80, who also gave a blessing in Hopi. Chairman Herman G. Honanie, The Hopi Tribe, addressed the group and thanked them for conducting this annual ride across both the Navajo and Hopi reservations. Miss Hopi, Alexie James; Miss Lori Piestewa Post #80, Brenda Dacawyma and Attendant, Lori Piestewa Post #80, Josephine Cook, also expressed their gratitude to the Veterans in the audience and wished the Riders a safe journey. Following the remarks, a special flag presentation was conducted for family members of Wilmer Kavena, U.S. Navy, World War II Veteran, and Vernon Dawavendewa, U.S. Army, Korean War Veteran. The time-honored TAPS was played as the Riders and Veterans in the audience rendered a final military salute to the departed veterans. The U.S. Flags were presented by representatives from the Riders to the families.

Following the flag presentations, the Riders were treated to coffee, bottled water, watermelon, cookies, and bananas. Included with the treats were Hopi "so'meviki", a sweet corn pudding wrapped in corn husk, specially made by the Lori Piestewa Post #80 Royalty. Within an hour, the Riders were fed and rested to begin their next leg to Bird Springs about 60 miles from Hopi. With that, "the leader of the pack" signaled for the Riders to start their cycles and soon the Riders slowly made their way back onto AZ Highway 264 to start traveling to their next destination. As quickly as they arrive, the Riders left and only the sound of the wind remained.

I would like to thank Lori Piestewa Post #80; Second Mesa Cultural Center; VA Outreach Mobile Van; Chairman Honanie; staff from Office of the Vice Chairman; Miss Hopi and the elite Pinion High School JROTC cadets for their participation in this small, but successful event. Kudos to the many people who donated the treats for the Riders. As usual the Hopi hospitality of sharing and giving was greatly appreciated and well received by the Riders. Kwa Kwa! Gunda! Thank you!

So let us not forget all Veterans and Military Members who have given the ultimate sacrifice to defend and protect our great nation this Memorial Day. As American citizens we owe them our gratitude for the freedoms we cherish everyday in the United States.

With our thanks from the Hopi Veterans Services staff! Eugene "Geno" Talas, Manager; Hanna Polewytewa, Secretary II; and Cedric Dawavendewa, Client Transporter.



### Hopi Code Talkers "Citizenship" Awards



At the end of each school year, Hopi Veterans Services sponsors and provides "Citizenship Awards" to the local Hopi Schools for the 6th and 8th grade promotion ceremonies. This year a young boy and girl from each school received a Citizenship Certificate, a Hopi Code Talker calendar, and a Hopi Code Talker lapel pin. The Hopi Junior High recipients also received a plaque.

We congratulate each of the winners and we also would like to sincerely thank each of the schools and teachers for supporting this awards program each school year.

Hopi Veterans Services extends our congratulations to all area Hopi students who were promoted and/or graduated from Head Start, Elementary, Junior High, High School and colleges. Parents should be proud of their accomplishments. See you next school season!

Moenkopi Day School:

Skyler Talahytewa (m)  
Lorae Zeena (f)

Hopi Day School:

Tyrall Roland (m)  
Aubrey Harvey (f)

First Mesa Elementary School:

Ty Shiver Lilly  
Mallory Rose Nutumya

Hotevilla-Bacavi Community School

Damian Isaac Mata (m)  
Koylynn Ruth Poseyesva (f)

Second Mesa Day School:

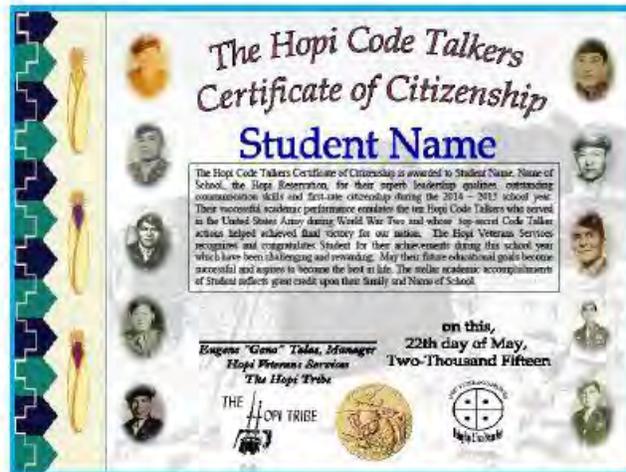
Skylan Bruce Masawytewa (m)  
Lenmana Audrey Masayumptewa (f)

Keams Canyon Elementary School:

Terrell Qotswisiwma (m)  
Emilia Thomas (f)

Hopi Junior High School:

Kiiyahno Harley Edgewater (m)  
Angellene Cathryne Shattuck (f)





## OTGR Central Region

(IA; MI; MN; MT; ND; NE; SD; WI; WY)

# FOND DU LAC RESERVATION 22<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL VETERANS' POWWOW



## JULY 10 - 12, 2015

MASH KA WISEN POWWOW GROUNDS  
HWY 210 & MISSION ROAD • SAWYER, MN

### SCHEDULE

#### Friday, July 10

7:00pm Grand Entry  
1st Round of Specials

#### Saturday, July 11

1:00pm and 7:00pm Grand Entry  
1:30pm Honoring of Veterans  
5:00pm Feast

#### Sunday, July 12

1:00pm Grand Entry  
3:00pm Lunch

### SPECIALS

Men's Grass Dance and Women's Jingle Dress

\*1st Round of Specials will be Friday Evening\*

Tug-o-War - Friday Evening

Saturday Night Special - Saturday Evening

\*All Dancers\*

### HOST DRUMS

MIDNITE EXPRESS • CEDAR CREEK  
YOUNG KINGBIRD • BLACK BEAR CROSSING

#### M.C.

Pete Ghabow

#### CO. M.C

Les Gibbs

#### Spiritual Advisor

Skip Sandman

#### Head Dancers

Mike Diver

Vanessa Northrup

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

TOM WHITEBIRD

218.878.2670

JARVIS PARO

218.878.8179



ALCOHOL AND DRUGS PROHIBITED



## *Breakfast Fundraiser*

# *July 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>*

*7:00 am – 11:00 am*

## *All you can eat*

*\$7.00 Adults Children 10 and under \$4.00*

*Oneida Nation Veterans Building, 134  
Riverdale Dr. 50-50, raffle, come on over  
for breakfast Let someone else cook.*



## Michigan REBOOT Workshops

April 27 - May 15, 2015

June 1 - 19, 2015

### Class locations

**April 27-May 15**  
**Michigan National Guard**

3411 N. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Lansing

**June 1-19**

**Kent County Human Services Building**

121 Franklin SE, Grand Rapids

Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

#### WEEK 1

##### Personal Transition

Addresses personal effectiveness and well-being. Spans 13 multi-media modules and uses video and audio sessions, written materials, exercises, practice interviews and self-assessment.

#### WEEK 2

##### Lifestyle Transition

Addresses living situation and community-life functioning. Exercises and discussion enable participants to identify values, talents and personal plans and strategies to achieve specific, meaningful goals.

#### WEEK 3

##### Career Transition

Addresses the Transition Domains of employment, career and education. Features in-depth assistance with job preparation, resume writing, interviewing techniques, job searching and career planning.

Making the transition back to civilian life from the war front to the home front can be a difficult challenge, especially for the newer and younger generation of servicemen and women who were deployed several times to Iraq and Afghanistan.

The Michigan Veterans Affairs agency is hosting two REBOOT Workshops™ - April 27-May 15 in Lansing and June 1-19 in Grand Rapids.

REBOOT Workshops™ are a series of hands-on educational seminars developed by the National Veterans Transition Services, Inc., that promote a successful social transition from military service to civilian life.

Designed to meet the unique needs of veterans as they transition from military to civilian life, the REBOOT Workshop™ provides veterans with the tools they need to succeed.

The workshops are free and class size is limited to 25 participants. Registration is available at [MichiganVeterans.com/MIREBOOT](http://MichiganVeterans.com/MIREBOOT).

The goal of the workshop is to assist veterans:

- ReLearn** Change the way they think.
- ReBuild** Find their passion!
- ReBrand** Prepare for their next career.

For more information, call 1-800-MICH-VET.

Sign-up Online!

[MichiganVeterans.com/MIREBOOT](http://MichiganVeterans.com/MIREBOOT)





## Female Veterans REBOOT Workshop

July 13-31, 2015

### Class location

#### MIAT College of Technology

2955 South Haggerty Road, Canton, MI 48188

Monday – Friday, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.

#### WEEK 1

##### Personal Transition

Addresses personal effectiveness and well-being. Spans 13 multi-media modules and uses video and audio sessions, written materials, exercises, practice interviews and self-assessment.

#### WEEK 2

##### Lifestyle Transition

Addresses living situation and community-life functioning. Exercises and discussion enable participants to identify values, talents and personal plans and strategies to achieve specific, meaningful goals.

#### WEEK 3

##### Career Transition

Addresses the Transition Domains of employment, career and education. Features in-depth assistance with job preparation, resume writing, interviewing techniques, job searching and career planning.

Making the transition back to civilian life from the war front to the home front can be a difficult challenge, especially for the newer and younger generation of service-men and women who were deployed several times to Iraq and Afghanistan.

Studies show that women veterans face greater challenges than their male counterparts. Yet there are very few programs to help them reassimilate into civilian life.

The Michigan Veterans Affairs agency is hosting a Women Veterans REBOOT Workshop™ July 13-31. Designed to meet the unique needs of women veterans as they transition from military to civilian life, the REBOOT Workshop™ is the nation's only transition program of its kind that provides female veterans with the tools they need to succeed.

REBOOT Workshops™ are a series of hands-on educational seminars developed by the National Veterans Transition Services, Inc., that promote a successful social transition from military service to civilian life.

The goal of the workshop is to assist veterans:

- ReLearn** Change the way they think.
- ReBuild** Find their passion!
- ReBrand** Prepare for their next career.

For more information, call 1-800-MICH-VET

Sign-up Online!

[MichiganVeterans.com/MIREBOOT](http://MichiganVeterans.com/MIREBOOT)





## Veterans in Michigan colleges may use military experience for academic credits

LANSING, Mich. – Veterans and active duty members of the military working their way to a bachelor’s degree at a Michigan college or university will be eligible to receive academic credits for some of their military experience, under legislation signed by Gov. Rick Snyder.

“Bridging the gap between military service and civilian life is one way we are constantly striving to do better for our veterans and active duty members of the armed forces,” Snyder said. “There are many areas in which military experience overlaps with education taught in college courses, and this new law will help ensure that credit is granted for that knowledge, allowing service members to receive their degree in a shorter period of time so they can embark on their new career.”

House Bill 4060, sponsored by state Rep. Holly Hughes, requires collaboration between the American Council on Education Registry of Credit Recommendations and the Department of Defense, identifying where military experience coincides with certain courses so that veterans can receive credit for those courses. The governor last year signed legislation applying these requirements to community colleges. The bill also requires the schools to inform active duty or veteran applicants of their eligibility to receive the academic credits. It is now Public Act 44 of 2015.

For more information on this and other legislation, visit:  
<http://www.legislature.michigan.gov>.



## FACT SHEET

### Veteran Outreach and Recovery Program (VORP)

(As of 4/19/2015)

In the fall of 2014, the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (WDHS), partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) applied for and was awarded a \$1.2 million dollar, 3 year grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) to provide mental health and substance abuse services to homeless and/or chronic homeless veterans in Wisconsin.

#### Overview

This new program is called the Veterans Outreach and Recovery Program (VORP). This comprehensive coordinated outreach, treatment and recovery support program for veterans who are homeless and have a behavioral health disorder will support the existing treatment and homeless programs and services in the 46 counties of northern and central Wisconsin. The new employees, started employment in April 2015, Outreach and Recovery Specialists (ORS's) work in each of the three identified regions where veterans have difficulties accessing adequate housing and treatment services. ORS's will work with key local contacts including county homeless programs, behavioral health services, and veteran groups and housing services. Supported by a Clinical Coordinator and Program Manager, the ORS's use the evidence-based Motivational Interviewing method to work with veterans who are homeless to ensure they have stable housing, connect them to proper treatment and follow up to ensure that the treatment is continual and effective, providing the appropriate recovery supports are successful.

#### Goals

- Establish partnerships with mental health and AODA providers in regions
- Work with local shelters and others to find temporary, transitional and permanent housing
- Establish a network that makes treatment options more accessible to rural veterans
- Identify homeless veterans and define gaps in treatment
- Provide information on housing and behavioral health treatment services to all homeless veterans contacted
- Ensure that 90% of the enrollee target population is connected to either housing or behavioral health services at follow-up
- Provide ongoing case management to a veteran client for the life of the grant
- Provide transportation to connect the veteran to proper treatment and follow up to ensure that the treatment is continual and effective

#### Contact person:

Karla Peterson, Veterans Outreach Specialist

Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs  
Wisconsin Department of Health Services  
Klein Hall  
2820 East Park Avenue  
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729  
Office: 715-726-2551  
Work Cell: 808-381-1525  
[Karla.Peterson@dva.wisconsin.gov](mailto:Karla.Peterson@dva.wisconsin.gov)



**WELCOME  
CEREMONY**  
TUESDAY AT 11:00 AM



STANDDOWN COURT &  
**LEGAL  
CLINIC**  
ALL DAY, BOTH DAYS

CONTACT MACV FOR MORE  
**INFORMATION**  
612.726.1327  
651.224.0290

PLEASE PROVIDE YOUR  
**DD214 FOR FASTER  
REGISTRATION**

**ALL VETERANS WELCOME**  
ALL BAGS MAY BE SEARCHED UPON  
ENTRY; NO DRUGS OR ALCOHOL  
ALLOWED



**STAND  
DOWN**  
**FOR VETERANS**



**AUGUST 4 & 5**  
TUESDAY: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM  
WEDNESDAY: 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM

**BOY SCOUT BASE CAMP**  
**201 BLOOMINGTON ROAD**  
FORT SNELLING

**FREE SERVICES AVAILABLE**  
MEALS • VA BENEFITS (CLAIMS & SERVICES)  
CLOTHING • HOUSING • PUBLIC BENEFITS  
HAIRCUTS • STATE DMV • AA/NA MEETINGS  
CHAPLAINCY • EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE  
WELLNESS • MENTAL HEALTH COUNSELING

**FREE PARKING & HANDICAP SHUTTLE**

## OTGR Southern Plains Region

(KS; OK; TX)



### Feature Story

# JCMVAMC Hosts First Tribal Relations Workshop

Story by **Nathan Schaeffer**, Public Affairs Specialist

Photo by **Chris Beshears**, Visual Information Specialist

Since July 2012, the **Jack C. Montgomery VA Medical Center (JCMVAMC)** has signed tribal reimbursement agreements with 28 tribal facilities and four Indian Health Service facilities in Eastern Oklahoma, as part of an initiative to increase access to health care for Native American Veterans.

Through funding from the VA Office of Rural Health, JCMVAMC will reimburse tribes when Native American Veterans, who are enrolled for VA health care, receive health care at their facilities. As a result of the reimbursement agreements, JCMVAMC has paid more than \$1.9 million to tribes from July 2012 to January 2015.

The agreements also allow VA and tribes to coordinate care by sharing patient information.

In an effort to further develop partnerships, JCMVAMC hosted a first-ever Tribal Relations Workshop on March 10 which was attended by 19 tribal representatives.

The workshop provided an opportunity for VA to discuss recent amendments to the reimbursement agreements, share information about VA programs and services for rural Veterans such as the Veteran Choice Program and Telehealth, and for VA and the tribes to share information.

"We have reimbursement agreements with all but one tribal entity in Eastern Oklahoma," said James Floyd, JCMVAMC Director. "So we want to start having at least annual meetings with them to talk about how things are working. We want them to know who we are and how we can help them if they have questions."

John Alley, JCMVAMC Indian Health Liaison, said one of the most important outcomes of the workshop was the opportunity to share information.

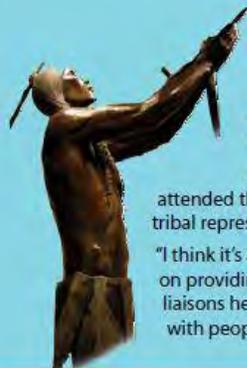
"We want to determine if there's anything we can improve or do differently to make the agreements better," said Alley. "We had a question and answer session and we were able to answer many questions. For the ones we didn't answer today, we will follow up with them."

Amy Eden, Revenue Cycle Manager for the Muscogee Creek Nation Department of Health, attended the workshop and said she learned valuable information not only from VA but from other tribal representatives.

"I think it's an excellent opportunity for all of the tribes to collaborate with one another and the VA on providing better health care for our Veterans," said Eden. "I really enjoy working with the tribal liaisons here at the VA. They've been exceptional to work with. They're so kind and it's like working with people we've known for a long time. It's very good."



James Floyd, JCMVAMC Director, speaks during the first-ever Tribal Relations Workshop on March 10 at the medical center.





**OKLAHOMA VA & COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT**  
**Monday, July 27<sup>th</sup> 2015, 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM**  
**The Rosser Conservation & Education Building, Oklahoma City Zoo**  
**2000 Remington Place**  
**Oklahoma City, OK 73111**  
 (The Rosser Building is located on the east side of the Zoo parking lot)

The Oklahoma City Veterans Affairs Medical Center invites you to the third annual Mental Health Summit. The focus of the Summit is to build and sustain collaborative relationships between the Oklahoma City VA and the community in providing mental health services for Oklahoma veterans. There is no registration fee, however RSVP as soon as possible due to limited space.

Please provide the information below:

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Agency: \_\_\_\_\_

Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact number: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check *two* of the three break-out sessions listed below that you are interested in attending.

Impact of Military Culture on Families     Domestic Violence     Community and VA Peer Support Services

**General session presentations for the Summit include:**

- Veteran Access, Choice and Accountability Act of 2014
- Overview of Eligibility/Veteran Benefits
- Needs of Families and Caregivers of Veterans
- ❖ Free one hour CEU presentation on PTSD

Prior to the MH Summit, participants are invited to submit or make updates to the National Resource Directory (NRD) website at <https://www.ebenefits.va.gov/ebenefits/nrd/suggest-resource> on information about Community Partner's Program/Services and VA Programs.

We have a limited amount of space for agencies to display pamphlets about their agency/services. If you are interested in bringing pamphlets about your agency/services please check here.

Please submit your completed registration form by email to [gretchen.rogers@va.gov](mailto:gretchen.rogers@va.gov). You may also submit your registration via fax at (405) 456-1538 attention Gretchen Rogers.

Lunch: on your own.      **RSVP: deadline noon July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015**      We hope to see you there!





**OKC VA NATIVE AMERICAN VETERAN'S ELDERS COUNCIL  
OKC VAHCS WARRIORS GROUP AND IN  
COLLABORATION WITH OKC VA AMERICAN INDIAN COUNCIL**

**Presents**

**16<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL VETERANS HONOR DANCE  
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13, 2015  
12:00 P.M TO 5:00 P.M**

**VA Medical Center, 921 NE 13<sup>th</sup> Street Oklahoma City, OK 73104  
(Northwest corner of NE 13<sup>th</sup> and Kelley)**

**HEAD STAFF---TBD**

Opening Ceremony and Grand Entry.....12:00 pm  
Gourd Dancing.....12:30 pm to 2:30 pm  
Dinner.....2:30 pm to 3:30 pm  
Resume Gourd Dancing.....3:30 pm to 5:00 pm

**All Veterans and Princesses invited.**

**Vendors Welcome**

**For more information contact:**  
**Candy Fish Klump 405-456-3808 or 405-394-1761**  
**Tempie Nichols-Rood 405-456-1129**

Head staff please be available by 11:00 a.m.  
Vendors welcome with limited booth space available. Contributions accepted.



**What is the MFP - Tribal Initiative?**

The Money Follows the Person (MFP) Tribal Initiative is a federal program to transition elders and other eligible tribal members out of inpatient facilities and back into their home in the community. The program also assists tribes in building the necessary resources to create sustainable, community-based long-term care services and supports specifically tailored for tribes.

**Who is eligible?**

Members of federally-recognized tribes in Oklahoma may be eligible if they:

- are age 19 and older;
- have lived more than 90 days in an inpatient facility (nursing or intermediate care);
- are interested in moving back to the community; and
- are eligible for SoonerCare at least one (1) day prior to leaving the inpatient facility.

**What kinds of services are available through the Tribal Initiative?**

Final services will be determined in consultation with the participating tribes but may include:

- Personal care
- Skilled nursing
- Case management
- Adult day services
- Transportation
- Home-delivered meals
- Limited dental services
- Counseling
- Self-direction for services
- Transition funds for housing needs (a one-time allotment of up to \$2,400)

**How does the Tribal Initiative benefit Oklahoma and tribal governments?**

- Offers states and tribes the resources to build sustainable community-based long-term services and supports specifically for Indian country.
- Oklahoma receives an enhanced SoonerCare funding match for the first year that each transitioned individual resides in the community.
- Those extra funds are then reinvested to create more possible opportunities for others to remain in their homes with the services they need.
- Participating in MFP helps tribes eliminate duplication of services and redeploy funds that are currently being used for services already provided by the Tribal Initiative waiver. It also offers access to services not currently provided by tribal governments.

**For more information or to participate:** Please call 888-287-2443 or email Russell Coker, MFP Tribal Initiative project manager, at [Russell.Coker@okhca.org](mailto:Russell.Coker@okhca.org).



**U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
Office of Tribal Government Relations  
Southern Plains Veterans Training Summit  
River Wind Hotel, Norman, Oklahoma**

**July 30, 2015: 8 am—4 pm**

**July 31, 2015: 8 am—2 pm**

- Understanding Veterans Health Administrations Eligibility Priority Groups
- VA Tribal and National Cemetery Programs
- Veterans Benefits Administration— updated information on:
  - Camp Lejeune & Contaminated Water
  - Burn Pit Registry
- Department of Defense (DOD) Discharge Upgrade program, process and information
- Update on Housing and Urban Development and the VA Supportive Housing Vouchers (HUD-VASH) Program
- Veterans Justice Outreach Program
  - Tulsa Veterans Court Programs
  - OK County Diversion Program
- These are only a few of the items presented at this year' summit.



[For Information contact:](#)

[405-456-3876](tel:405-456-3876) or [405-626-3426](tel:405-626-3426)

[To register contact:](#)

[Mary.Culley@va.gov](mailto:Mary.Culley@va.gov)

**Have you ever served in the military? Do you service those who have served in the military? Are you the widow of someone who has served in the military? Unsure? Take this opportunity to listen and ask..**



WWII ANNIVERSARY  
SPIRIT OF '45  
**Celebration and Concert**



WHAT: Commemoration of WWII Victory Anniversary  
WHEN: Saturday \* August 15, 2015  
TIME: 11 o'clock AM  
WHERE: Seminole State College, Haney Center  
2701 Boren Blvd., Seminole 74868  
COST: Free Admission

*SPECIAL RECOGNITION:*  
World War II Veterans and All Veterans

*SPECIAL PATRIOTIC CONCERT:*  
"Desiah"  
Nationally-Acclaimed and Award-Winning Youth Singers from California

*FEATURED SPECIAL GUEST:*  
**Maj.Gen. Myles L. Deering, ODVA**  
Secretary of Veterans Affairs for Oklahoma

Sponsored by:  
**Veterans Affairs Department, Seminole Nation of Oklahoma**  
K. Galen Greenwalt, Director

\*\*\* For more information, call Seminole Veterans Office (405) 234-5242 \*\*\*

**Bring your family and friends.**  
**EVERYONE INVITED!**

## About VA's Office of Tribal Government Relations (OTGR)

The OTGR team works to strengthen and build closer relations between the VA, tribal governments and other key federal, state, private and non-profit partners in an effort to effectively and respectfully serve Veterans across Indian Country. This work is done in the spirit of government to government consultation and collaboration, respectful of the special relationship that exists between the United States and tribal governments.

Our efforts focus on three important goals: facilitating VA's Tribal Consultation Policy, facilitating increased access to health care and promoting economic sustainability (highlighting opportunities for Veterans to access fiscal, educational, housing and other special programs and benefits through the VA).

We bring key partners to the table to address important issues raised by tribal leaders. Linking decision makers and stake holders to tribal leadership ensures Indian Country's Veterans know who we at VA are, what VA offers Veterans and how to reach VA to ensure access to the full range of services and benefits our Veterans have courageously earned through their service.



## Meet the OTGR Staff

Washington, DC

Director, Office of Tribal Government Relations: [Stephanie Birdwell](#)

Phone: (202) 461-7400

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## Regional Specialists

### Region 1

**Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island**

Office of Tribal Government Relations Specialist: [Peter Vicaire](#)

Phone: (651) 405-5676

### North Carolina

Office of Tribal Government Relations Specialist: [Mary Culley](#)

Phone: (405) 456-3876

### Region 2

**Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina**

Office of Tribal Government Relations Specialist: [Mary Culley](#)

Phone: (405) 456-3876

### Region 3

**Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin**

Office of Tribal Government Relations Specialist: [Peter Vicaire](#)

Phone: (651) 405-5676

### Kansas

Office of Tribal Government Relations Specialist: [Mary Culley](#)

Phone: (405) 456-3876

### Region 4

**Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, Texas**

Office of Tribal Government Relations Specialist: [Mary Culley](#)

Phone: (405) 456-3876

### Colorado, Utah

Office of Tribal Government Relations Specialist: [LoRae Homana Pawiki](#)

Phone: (928) 776-5306

### Montana, Wyoming

Office of Tribal Government Relations Specialist: [Peter Vicaire](#)

Phone: (651) 405-5676

### Region 5

**Alaska, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Washington**

Office of Tribal Government Relations Specialist: [Terry Bentley](#)

Phone: (541) 440-1271

### Arizona, New Mexico

Office of Tribal Government Relations Specialist: [LoRae Homana Pawiki](#)

Phone: (928) 776-5306