

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 2011



All veterans are reminded that the fastest way to inquire and secure the benefits you have earned is by visiting your local County Veterans Service Office. A listing of these offices is available at www.cacvso.org or on CalVet's website at www.calvet.ca.gov/resources/database.aspx



(L-R) Stefen Wisniewski, Damola Adeniji, Roy Schuening, Darryl Blackstock, Kevin Brock, Alex Parsons, Alan Pelc, Seth Wand, Lou Eliades, DeMarcus Van Dyke, Chimdi Chewka, Mason Brodine, Bryson Kelly

RAIDERS SCORE TOUCHDOWN AT VETS HOME

By Jaime A. Arteaga
Staff Writer

The Oakland Raiders scored a major touchdown on Sunday, August 21 when 13 Silver and Black team members arrived for a short visit with the residents of the Veterans Home of California,

Yountville. The meeting, during the dinner hour, between these two generations was a game well played.

Upon their arrival, the Silver and Black lined up against the windows for roll-call and for each to give a brief introduction of the lineup. Each player nervously took the microphone and introduced themselves. But just like that, all that nervous energy transformed into warm and friendly introductions with residents as they fanned out among the dining

tables for a few minutes of conversation with each home member.

"I am very pleased that the Oakland Raiders came to the Veterans Home of California in Yountville to spend time with our veteran residents, many of whom are Silver and Black fans," said Robin Umberg, CalVet Undersecretary for Veterans Homes. "It is admirable that these Raiders team members took time out of their very busy training schedule

RAIDERS, page 2 >>



CalVet Women Veteran's Conference



Enhancing Inner Beauty, Inner Strength

October 7 - 8, 2011 DoubleTree Hotel, Ontario Airport
222 North Vineyard Ave
Ontario, CA 91764

Early Bird Registration:

\$30

(Now - Sept. 13)

\$40

(Sept. 14 - Sept. 30)

Event Day Registration:

\$50



To volunteer at the 2011 CalVet Women Veteran's Conference, please contact Linda Umberg at 909-387-5986

INSIDE

- Engaging the Media p. 3
- Video Games & PTSD p. 6
- Infiniteon Raceway p. 7
- Women Veterans p. 11
- Upcoming Events p. 13

<< RAIDERS

to bring cheer and team spirit to this wonderful veterans home."

Although some players were rookies, they tackled the art of one-on-one conversation with the veterans in an awe inspiring manner. A couple of Raiders, Roy Schuening and Alex Parsons, working as a team, expertly handed off the conversation as they made sure to include each veteran at the dining table.

The Silver and Black made sure to tackle any wide open space among the opposing team of welcoming veteran fans. Going offensively from table to table demonstrating their incredible person-to-person pick up skills, the Raiders professionally intercepted each others conversations as they approached each opposing team veteran.

By the end of the 50-minute championship encounter, many more residents of the Veterans Home had changed their allegiance to the Silver

and Black, thanks to the kindness and friendship demonstrated by these hunky players.

This was not the first time the Oakland Raiders have visited the Veterans Home of California, Yountville. It has been a tradition for a few years for them to visit during training in the Napa region.



NORMAN ANDREWS APPOINTED LANCASTER VETS HOME ADMINISTRATOR

Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. has appointed Norman Andrews as Administrator of the William J. "Pete" Knight Veterans Home of California-Lancaster.

"We are delighted to welcome Norman as the new Administrator of the William J. "Pete" Knight Veterans Home of California in Lancaster," said Robin Umberg, Undersecretary for Veterans Homes, California Department of Veterans Affairs. "Norman brings with him a wealth of knowledge and experience in hospital administration. He will be a great addition to our CalVet Veterans Homes team."

Andrews has been a consultant at Andrews and Associates since 2010. He was the administrator and chief executive officer at Kindred Hospital Westminster from 2007 to 2010 and also at Kindred Hospital San Gabriel Valley from 2005 to 2007. He served in multiple positions at Antelope Valley Medical Center from 1999 to 2005, including hospital supervisor and senior vice president of operations.

Andrews was chief executive officer of Oak Valley District Hospital from 1998 to 1999, chief executive officer for Econo Health Group from 1997 to 1998, and the administrator of Priority Health Services from 1994 to 1997.



Member Kathy Tuhy shares a "fan"tastic moment with Raider Kevin Brock.



Member Ron Webster enjoys a friendly chat with Raiders Alan Pelc and Seth Wand.



Home member Jim Minard arm wrestles Raider Stefan Wisniewski.



Eloise Morales, CalVet Farm and Home with Raiders Roy Schuening and Alex Parsons

ENGAGING THE MEDIA IN 2011

By Jeanne Bonfilio
Staff Writer

In partnership with the Los Angeles Air Force Base, the Greater Los Angeles Public Affairs Council held a free panel discussion, “Engaging the Media in 2011” at the Veterans Home of California in West Los Angeles on August 17. The Council is an affinity group of the Federal Executive Board of Los Angeles and a professional development network of more than 75 federal public affairs officers that shares best practices. The organization holds two workshops per year. More than fifty were in attendance including staff from the California Department of Veterans Affairs.

Panelists included: Andrew Blankstein, reporter from the Los Angeles Times; Zach Behrens, Editor-in-



(L-R) Bruce Bender, Public Information Officer, Los Angeles Air Force Base; Steven Gregory, Investigative Reporter, KFI-AM radio; Ander Blankstein, reporter, Los Angeles Times; Zach Behrens, Editor-in-Chief of Blogs, KCET-TV; Dave Bryan, Political Reporter, KCAL-TV; Ruben Moreno, Reporter, La Opinión Newspaper and Kate Kuykendall, Public Information Officer, Peace Corps.

Chief of Blogs at KCET-TV; Dave Bryan, Political Reporter from KCAL-TV; Steven Gregory, Investigative Reporter from KFI-AM radio; and Ruben Moreno, Reporter, La Opinión Newspaper.

Discussion topics included: “How social media has impacted the media and how we should engage differently as a result of these changes;” “How to work with media and develop relationships given huge staffing changes;” and “Updated do’s and don’ts

of pitching media for 2011, particularly as they relate to technology and social media.”

The California Department of Veterans Affairs was delighted to provide this venue at the Veterans Home of California – West Los Angeles in partnership with the Los Angeles Air Force Base and the Greater Los Angeles Public Affairs Council.

THE SPIRIT OF '45 IS ALIVE AND WELL IN LA

By Jeanne Bonfilio
Staff Writer

A “Spirit of ‘45” Salute to World War II Veterans commemorating the end of World War II was held August 17 at the Veterans Home of California in West Los Angeles.

Master of Ceremonies Patrick Keleher, Supervising Rehabilitation Therapist, did a great job as always coordinating the yearly event which honors and remembers veterans of World War II for their service and commemorates the end of World War II on August 14, 1945.

Keleher invited featured speaker Bea Cohen, a 101-year-old World War II Army veteran whose husband was an Ex-

Prisoner of War. Cohen provided a brief, moving history of her service in World War II – and even recalled the beginning of World War I as a four-year-old child growing up in Romania. “You are all my heroes,” she said to the World War II veteran residents in attendance. “And never, never forget that.”

Many World War II veteran residents attended the ceremony. Among those, Dr. Eugene Winn provided a memorable invocation and recited the Gettysburg Address. A special salute to veterans was given by resident Willie Freeman and opening remarks were provided by Stephen Rosmarin, who also serves on the Los Angeles County Military and Veterans Commission. World War II veteran Paul Lally recited a patriotic poem and Leon Brookins gave a moving Benediction.



Veterans Home resident Stephen Rosmarin shares World War II memories with Bea Cohen, who he has known for more than 50 years.

As the country commemorates the end of World War II, the California Department of Veterans Affairs honors and remembers World War II Veterans – and thanks them for their dedicated service to our Nation.

**CalVet Women
Veteran's Conference**
Enhancing Inner Beauty, Inner Strength

A Call for Artists & Writers!!

Bring **art** to be displayed at the conference!

Paintings, Drawings, Fiber, Wood,
Graphic Design, Fashion, Photography,
Sculptures, Collage, Ceramics!



Submit your **writing!**

One piece will be chosen from all entries to be
read during the conference.
2 min MAX: Short Story, Poem, Rap, Best Advice,
Favorite Character, Funniest Memory,
Lesson Learned, Letter written home, etc.

October 7 - 8, 2011
DoubleTree Hotel
Ontario Airport
222 North Vineyard Ave
Ontario, CA 91764

Send writing to:
ElaineSuranie@aol.com
(323) 559-1157

Hosted by the California
Department of Veterans
Affairs and the Inland Empire
Women Veterans
Collaborative. For more
information, visit
www.calvet.ca.gov



VIDEO GAME HELPS DISABLED VETERANS CONQUER PTSD

Disabled veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts are playing a video game with their therapists, but it's not for fun. The game's high-tech virtual reality world recreates the soldier's worst nightmare.

The Office of Naval Research and University of Southern California's futuristic Institute for Creative Technologies combined resources to create the game to treat Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Therapists guide veterans into their most difficult battlefield experience in order to gradually desensitize them.

PTSD Treatment Results Encouraging

Studies are ongoing, but of the initial 20 patients treated with Virtual Iraq/Afghanistan, 16 no longer meet diagnostic criteria for PTSD at post-treatment.

Imitating aspects of the popular game Full Spectrum Warrior, psychologist "Skip" Rizzo and his colleagues conceptualized the program that allows veterans to re-live traumatic experiences from their time in theater. Therapists use a touch-screen to add helicopter sounds, change the weather or even waft in the smell of body odor.

But the two cues that elicit the most intense physiological reactions? Rizzo says heart rates spike at the repeating

gunfire on an AK-47 as well as at the most incongruous of battlefield noises: a baby's cry.

Virtual Reality Sessions Evoke Painful Memories

"Eventually, as they tell their story, you find out that it wasn't just a vehicle in front," Rizzo says, "it was a vehicle with five other friends. The guy that dies was going to be discharged in two months. You start to see a rich depth of story."

Rizzo notes that in the VR game he created, therapists have total control. A session might begin with the soldier seated in a virtual Humvee, the sound of the desert wind in the background. That can be enough to get the soldier talking about his experience. As the therapy progresses, more sensations are added.

The game is so realistic that it's possible to have the seat cushion vibrate when the virtual Humvee is turned on. The idea is to reintroduce the trauma-inducing events slowly, until the patient no longer reacts strongly to the stimuli.

Virtual Reality the Perfect Vehicle

The therapy particularly appeals to the largely young, male patients who are familiar with video game formats. It appears that a generation raised on X-Box and Wii doesn't assign the usual stigma to a buddy's mental illness when therapy includes virtual reality play.

Courtesy of Debbie Marsh
www.disaboom.com

MALU, MALUHIA, LA'I (PEACE) AND ALOHA (LOVE) TO ALL VETERANS

There is always something fun and exciting going on for residents at the William J. "Pete" Knight Veterans Home of California in Lancaster. And the month of August was no exception!

On August 24, more than 180 people participated in a fabulous luau at the Lancaster Veterans Home. Veterans Home residents and their family members, Hawaiian dancers, and staff all had a great time together in pilialoha (friendship) listening to Hawaiian music, watching the beautiful and talented dancers and enjoying a wonderful Luau lunch together.

The Veterans Home kitchen, with the help of Chef Sunil from Air Force Village West, prepared quite a feast! On the menu were such treats as a suckling pig and a special Tiki Bar hosted by the Lancaster Veterans of Foreign Wars Ladies Auxiliary.

The Halau Hula O Kanoelani Polynesian Dance Troupe dancers, dressed in nohea (lovely) Hawaiian dresses entertained for no charge, as

LUAU, page 6 >>



The Nani, u'i, maika'i (beautiful) Halau Hula O Kanoelani Polynesian Dance Troupe Hawaiian entertains the residents.



REDUCE, REUSE, AND RECYCLE AT THE VETS CEMETERY

By Frank Kohlberg
Supervising Groundskeeper

Cemetery headstones are the property of the federal government. Once a headstone is damaged, reordered, and/or replaced, the old headstone must be made unusable. This is usually done by breaking it into pieces so as to be unreadable and the pieces buried to prevent them from being used for any other purpose. Stories of old headstones being used to build walls

and patios abound. These uses are not compatible with the honorable and dignified purpose for which they are intended.

The Northern California Veterans Cemetery (NCVC) recently teamed up with Sunrise Excavating in an effort to diminish the time-consuming labor involved in the breaking and burying of old headstones, and allow for a more productive use of headstone remnants. During the past year, all upright granite headstones and niche markers

scheduled for destruction were saved and stacked on pallets.

Once a year, Sunrise Excavating rents a large concrete crusher and grinder and they reduce large piles of dirt fill, concrete, rock, and asphalt into a couple of products. One of these is sorted as gravel and road base, the other is dirt fill. As soon as NCVC was notified that the machine was in place, the headstones were transported to Sunrise Excavating where they turned them into road base. This service was provided free of cost and the product was ultimately returned to NCVC to use as part of a parking lot project.

“This is a very effective way to recycle and reuse old headstones, plus, by doing this we are able to save the State money,” said Steve Jorgenson, NCVC Administrator. “This also insures that these memorial markers are never used in questionable ways.”

The cemetery is on top of recycling in other ways as well. The local waste management company provides, at no cost, waste bins and trash containers for cardboard and white paper, thus reducing our impact on landfills.

<< LUAU

a tribute to the veteran residents. The dancers even choreographed a special patriotic hula dance to end their great performance!

The California Department of Veterans Affairs Me ka mahalo, me ka pono (respectfully) thanks Chef Sunil from Air Force Village West, the Lancaster Veterans of Foreign Wars Ladies Auxiliary and Halau Hula O Kanoelani Polynesian Dance Troupe for donating their time and talents to this event. A nui, nunui (big) thanks to Lawrence Hawkins, Supervising Rehabilitation Therapist, for coordinating this and other wonderful events for Veterans Home residents.



**Currently Accepting
Applications
for Residency**

For admission information, contact:
William J. "Pete" Knight
Veterans Home of California—Lancaster
45221 30th Street West
Lancaster, CA 93536
(661) 974-7035, ext. 6





LOCAL VETERANS ENJOY INFINEON RACEWAY GRAND PRIX EVENT

By Carolyn Ballou
Staff Writer

Thanks to a partnership involving Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) and Operation: Care and Comfort, Infineon Raceway donated 500 tickets to the California Department of Veterans Affairs (CalVet) for the Grand Prix of Sonoma race on Sunday, August 28. The race was one of Infineon's biggest of the year, featuring the stars and cars of the Indy 500 including Danica Patrick, Helio Castroneves, Dario Franchitti and others.

On behalf of all the recipient veteran service organizations and the grateful veterans who attended the race, CalVet thanks PG&E and Infineon Raceway, for the donated tickets that were distributed to the following veteran service organizations.

- American Indian Veteran Association
- American Legion Post 208 - Dixon
- California DVBE Alliance
- Colusa Veteran Service Office
- Community Based Warrior Transition Unit
- EDD Northern Workforce Services Division
- El Dorado County Dept. Veterans Affairs
- Disabled American Veterans Chapter 6
- Placer County Veteran Service Office
- Los Rios Community District Colleges
- Salvation Army
- Sierra College Veterans Office
- Soldiers' Angels Northern CA
- UC Davis Veterans Office
- U.S. Coast Guard
- VA Sacramento Veteran Center
- VA Volunteer Services
- VFW Post 67 – Sacramento
- VFW Post 85 – Sacramento
- VFW Post 1487 – Dixon
- VFW Post 10125 – Gold River
- Vietnam Veterans of American Chapter 500
- Yolo County Veterans Coalition
- Yuba Sutter Veterans Stand Down

CALIFORNIA
California
**MEXICAN
AMERICAN
VETERANS
MEMORIAL**

**YOU CAN
HELP!**

**DONATE
TODAY!!**

WWW.MAVM.CA.GOV





A BURIAL PLOT DILEMMA

By Steve Jorgenson, Administrator
Northern California Veterans Cemetery

I recently received a telephone call from a veteran who had just moved to the Redding area. He was interested in knowing more about the Northern California Veterans Cemetery (NCVC) and our program to establish eligibility in advance of need. In our conversation he told me that a number of years ago he purchased a mausoleum cremation niche at a private cemetery near his previous home in Southern California. He no longer planned to use it since he wanted to be buried in our cemetery.

He began to explain to me that he spent a good deal of time and money with no results attempting to sell the niche. The cemetery in Southern California does not offer any means to repurchase or to sell niches or gravesites for customers. While I could have suggested eBay or Craigslist as an alternative method to advertise and sell the niche, there is no telling how long it would take to see any results, and more than likely, the return would be for much less than the current market value of a comparable niche. Instead I suggested that he might want to consider donating the niche to a non-profit, such as a church, in which case he could obtain a tax deduction. While the value of a tax deduction to a non-profit varies depending on your personal income, it does offer an opportunity to

recover part of your loss and will provide a burial plot to some needy person who might not otherwise have one. Alternatively, he may choose to gift it to a relative without a plot.

After our conversation ended I began to wonder how many veterans were in the same situation of having purchased a gravesite or a niche only later to find out that in a National or State Veterans Cemetery there is no cost for the gravesite or niche. In discussing this with staff, they related that this is a common occurrence when they work with new cases. Veterans are left with previously purchased gravesite plots and/or niches.

We encourage veterans to become familiar with these burial benefits, as they also may include partial reimbursement for funeral services and partial reimbursement for purchase of a cemetery plot in a private cemetery. Burial in National or State Veterans Cemeteries is an earned benefit, paid for by service in the armed forces of our nation. Unfortunately many veterans remain unaware of the full extent of this entitlement. Burial in these cemeteries includes the gravesite or columbaria niche, the opening and closing of the burial site, the ordering and installation of the headstone or niche cover, and the perpetual care and maintenance of the gravesite.

To learn more regarding your veterans cemetery benefits please call the NCVC at (866) 777-4533, or visit the Veterans Administration website at www.cem.va.gov.



DFAS LAUNCHES myPAY MOBILE APP

myPay, the online pay account management system for all U.S. military personnel, military retirees, and many federal civilian employees, has gone mobile.

Now myPay users can check pay statements on the go using a smart phone or other mobile device that has a web browser.

For more information visit DOD Live at www.dodlive.mil/index.php/2011/07/mypay-goes-mobile.

VETERANS! You may be eligible for a home loan!

For more information contact CalVet at www.calvet.ca.gov/calvetloans or call (866) 653-2510



Hear our voices

The State of California
American Indian
Veterans Association (AIVA)

2nd Annual Conference

September 13 & 14, 2011

Hosted by AIVA of Southern California
in conjunction with local tribes.

Talking circles for those interested in veteran affairs,
rehabilitation issues, legislation and the unique needs and
concerns of American Indian veterans.

- ✦ Color Guard ✦ Drummers ✦ Traditional Entertainment ✦
 - ✦ Veteran Service Providers ✦ Tribal Leaders ✦
 - ✦ Special Guest Speakers ✦
- Vendors welcome!

Registration:
\$25

Pala Casino Spa & Resort
11154 Highway 76, Pala CA 92059

Limited number of rooms available
at discounted room rate of \$89.
Reservations must be made by August 23rd
to receive this special rate.

To reserve your room, call
(877) 725-2766 and mention
the special booking code AMEI11A.

For more information, contact:
Pedro Molina, Assistant Secretary of
Native American Veterans Affairs
(916) 651-5040

or visit www.aivasocal.org





Undersecretary Larry Gonzales with River Cats mascot, Dinger, moments before the first pitch of the game.

RIVERCATS AGAIN HOST LOCAL VETERANS

By Carolyn Ballou
Staff Writer

The Sacramento Rivercats made another generous donation of home game tickets which CalVet distributed to more than three dozen veteran service organizations. The donation made it possible for more than 800 local veterans to enjoy a mid-day baseball game on the last day of August to see the Rivercats play the Las Vegas 51's.

More than 10,000 spectators got to see CalVet Undersecretary Larry Gonzales throw the first pitch of the game. Just for fun, CalVet Facebook friends were asked whether Undersecretary Gonzales' pitch would

make it to home plate. "Yes, of course, Gonzales has an arm like a cannon" and "No way. I think he'll bounce it" were the choices voters were given. The majority of voters thought the pitch would make it home and, as it turns out, it did!

"CalVet works hard to get veterans connected with the benefits they've earned through military service," said Gonzales. "It feels great to be able to offer them a day of fun from time to time as well. I was proud to represent our service men and women at the game and very glad my pitch was not embarrassing!" Rivercats beat the 51's, 4 runs to 3!

If your veteran service organization would like to be considered for future Rivercats baseball ticket distributions, contact pao@calvet.ca.gov.

SECOND-HAND TREASURES FOUND AT VENTURA VETS HOME!

By Jeanne Bonfilio
Staff Writer

"Thank you to everyone who helped make the second annual Community Garage Sale at the Ventura Veterans Home a huge success," beamed Lynda Griffin, coordinator of the well attended August 13 event and the Veterans Home's Supervising Rehabilitation Therapist.

The community came out in droves to participate; some arriving as early as 6 a.m.! Several hundred people showed up throughout the day to support the beautiful veterans home and the 57 veterans who reside there.

Griffin, as well as Administrator Brenda Manke, and an enthusiastic group of volunteers, residents and staff



(L-R) Robert Aguilar, Security Guard; Madeline Lee, American Legion volunteer; Lynda Griffin, Supervising Rehabilitation Therapist; Delsie Anthony, (Activity Coordinator; Mary Anne Allen, Activity Coordinator; Jazmin Gomez, Medical Records and her son, Ozzie.

members, did a wonderful job to make this year's event even bigger and better than last year's Community Garage Sale

"It was great to see so many staff, volunteers and residents participating," added Griffin. "Especially enjoyable was watching so many Veterans Home residents get up bright and early to help move and sell items, but most especially to enjoy the day shopping as well!

Thirty booths were purchased for \$20 each, which went to the Veterans Recreation and Welfare Fund to purchase such items as movie and theater tickets, recreational equipment, electronic and board games, trips and more – anything to improve the quality of their lives. Other proceeds were also donated to the home from sales. This year the Veterans Home raised \$1,130.

Women Veterans

LONG BEACH STAND DOWN FOCUSES ON NEEDS OF WOMEN VETERANS

More than 100 women veterans from the Southern California region gathered in Long Beach on July 15th for an event that was the first of its kind in California, an all Female Veterans Stand Down.

The stand down was hosted by U.S. VETS in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau. 95 organizations gathered to offer free services to female veterans, which included mental health, medical, financial, legal, housing, veteran benefits, clothing, beauty, massage, and employment services, all in an effort to address the needs of women veterans and help them get back on their feet.

With the number of women veterans expected to more than double from 6.1 percent to 15.1 percent by the year 2036, meeting the needs of this growing population is more important than ever. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, women veterans are twice as likely to become homeless after leaving military duty.

"Some of the needs of women veterans are the same as their male counterparts, but others are gender specific," said Barbara Ward, Deputy Secretary for Women and Minority Veterans Affairs for the California Department of Veterans Affairs. "This stand down provided an environment where women could get services and feel comfortable sharing their experiences and addressing their needs."

Additional articles written about the stand down.

Stand Down begins tailoring services for female veterans (LA Times)

<http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/16/local/la-me-vets-standdown-20110716>.

Long Beach gathering helps women veterans (Contra Costa Times)

www.contracostatimes.com/california/ci_18487023

State's First-ever Homeless Female Vets Stand Down... (Long Beach Post)

<http://www.lbpost.com/news/erika/11998>

TRAUMA GUIDE WILL FACILITATE AID TO HOMELESS WOMEN VETERANS

Hilda Solis, Secretary for the U.S. Department of Labor Secretary recently released "Trauma-Informed Care for Women Veterans Experiencing Homelessness: A Guide for Service Providers," to address the mental health needs of the growing population of

women veterans. The Trauma Guide examines the experiences and obstacles facing women veterans, to give service providers a comprehensive approach to meeting their needs. The guide is a result of nationwide listening sessions, which included women veterans and service providers, regarding issues that impact this unique demographic.

To view the full Trauma Guide, please visit www.dol.gov/wb/trauma.

WOMEN ENSURED PREVENTATIVE HEALTH CARE AT NO ADDITIONAL COST

New Guidelines released by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will ensure that women receive preventative care at no additional cost. The guidelines, developed by the Institute of Medicine, are part of the Affordable Care Act, which require new health insurance plans to cover women's preventive services without charging a co-payment, co-insurance or a deductible. These historic guidelines will go a long way in making sure that women receive the health care they need to avoid disease and extensive medical problems.

For more information please visit www.healthcare.gov/news/factsheets/womensprevention08012011a.html.

The guidelines can be found at www.hrsa.gov/womensguidelines/.

Opportunity Expo

October 6, 2011

11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

A free hiring event for veterans who already have civilian work experience, men and women who are transitioning from active duty to civilian life, members of the National Guard and reserves, and military spouses. For more info, visit www.recruitmilitary.com/expos/389-Carson-Greater-Los-Angeles/candidates/information



Umberg responds to questions from the news media. L to R: Assembly member Linda Halderman, Jaime Todd, Administrator, Assembly member Henry Perea, Robin Umberg, Undersecretary for Veterans Homes, Unknown person, Charlie Waters and Joe Stasikonis, Central California Veterans Home Support Foundation, and Congressman Jim Costa.

FRIENDLY EXCHANGE AT THE FRESNO VETERANS HOME

By Jaime Arteaga
Staff Writer

On Friday, August 26, the Honorable Jim Costa, U.S. House of Representatives invited Robin Umberg, CalVet Undersecretary for Veterans Homes and the Honorable Henry Perea and Linda Halderman, MD, California State Assembly to a meeting to address concerns by local veterans as to why the opening of the Veterans Home of California, Fresno was being postponed.

"The bottom line is that given the drastic situation of our California State budget, all Departments were impacted and forced to absorb necessary reductions to their individual budgets," stated Umberg. "CalVet was also impacted. The budget forced us to delay the opening of these veterans homes but did not impact the services or quality of care we are providing our current residents."

Umberg explained to the attendees, including Charlie Waters and Joe Stasikonis from the Central California

Veterans Home Support Foundation that there is a ramping up period for opening veterans homes. It takes time to hire appropriate staff, to make sure the facility is operating correctly, and for the different federal and state agencies to grant the appropriate licenses.

"We recognize how important this veterans home is to the local veterans and their families," stated Umberg. "Until this veterans home opens, I want to make sure veterans in need know they can enter one of our other wonderful homes and be placed on a priority list for admission to this veterans home."

"But what I want to get out of this meeting is the reassurance that the Fresno Veterans Home will be opened," stated Costa.

"The Governor, Secretary Gravett, Democrats and Republicans, as you can see here today, are all committed to opening this facility as quickly as possible," added Umberg.

Halderman and Perea both explained recent legislation they had introduced to help guarantee that the Fresno Veterans Home would open and admit residents on time. Both seemed to understand the current situation and agreed to continue working with CalVet on finding solutions.

Waters made a point of stressing that there were many veterans with no place to go that needed CalVet's assistance to find a place to live.

"We are in agreement that there are many veterans in need of assistance now," responded Umberg. "We believe that part of the answer lies with community-based organizations and nonprofits that offer the services veterans need immediately. We are working with these organizations to set up agreements where we will fast track veterans who complete their programs, into the veterans homes currently in operation. But a lot more needs to be done."

After lots of friendly exchange between the participants which ended with reassurances that the veterans home would be opening with a delay of approximately 6 months to a year, the attendees moved outside where Costa's staff had set up a news conference.

— USDVA BRIEFS —

VA Publishes Social Media Policy

Policy Establishes Responsible Use for Web-based Collaboration Tools

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announced today the release of a policy directive regarding the secure use of Web-based collaboration and social media tools. The policy allows the Department and its employees to leverage emerging platforms that enhance communication, stakeholder outreach, and information exchange as the Department transforms itself into a 21st Century organization attuned to the needs of Veterans of all generations.

www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2150

VA Reaches Out to Veterans to Explain Upcoming Changes to GI Bill

Encourages Veterans to Visit VA Website to Learn More

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is reaching out to inform Veterans of recent changes made by Congress to the Post 9/11 GI Bill that take effect in 2011.

www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2147

VA Earns Recognition for Workforce Diversity

Student Intern Program Averages 58 Participants Every Summer

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has been selected by the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) to receive the

Outstanding HACU Public Partner Award in recognition of the Department's efforts to bring Hispanics into its workforce. The award will be presented at HACU's 25th Annual Conference this October in San Antonio, Texas.

www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2141

VA Funds Solar Energy Projects at 5 Hospitals

To Promote Innovation & Create Jobs

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has awarded \$56.7 million in contracts to build solar photovoltaic (PV) systems in support of ongoing energy efficiency and renewable energy initiatives.

www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2140

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UPCOMING EVENTS

CalVet News

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Sacramento, CA 95814
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F (916) 653-2611
pao@calvet.ca.gov

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Graphic Designer

SEPTEMBER 10

VA Palo Alto's 3rd "Stand Down" in the South Bay

Boulder Creek Scout Reservation
250 Scout Ranch Rd,
Boulder Creek, CA 95006

SEPTEMBER 11

Bikers Helping Veterans Harley Davidson Charity Ride for the West Los Angeles Veterans Home

Contact: Jeanne Bonfillio (424) 832-8219

SEPTEMBER 11

State Agency—September 11th 10 Year Anniversary Remembrance

State Capitol Building, West Steps
Sacramento, CA

SEPTEMBER 13

2nd Annual California American Indian Veterans Association Conference

Pala Casino Spa & Resort
11154 Highway 76, Pala, CA 92059
www.aivasocal.org

SEPTEMBER 16-18

2011 Sacramento Stand Down

Camp Pollock, CA

OCTOBER 7-8

California Women Veteran's Conference

Ontario Doubletree Hotel
222 North Vineyard Ave, Ontario, CA 91764
www.calvet.ca.gov/WomenMinority/Conference.aspx

OCTOBER 16

Gold Coast Veterans Foundation Reception and Golf Tournament

Spanish Hills Country Club
999 Crestview, Camarillo, CA 93010
www.spanishhillsc.com

44th Native American Day Celebrating Honored Elders

Honoring our Native Elders who keep the traditions, stories,
languages, and culture alive for future generations.



Photo Courtesy of The Sacramento Bee

Thursday, September 22, 2011

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

**South Steps of the State Capitol Building
(Sacramento, CA near 11th & N Street)**

Tule River Color Guard, Drummers, Cultural Demonstrations, Traditional Artists, State Agency Exhibitors, Tribal Leaders, State Officials and Traditional Entertainment.

Event is free to the public

Presented by the California State Tribal Liaisons and California State Indian Museum

For more information contact: Anecita Agustinez ♦ (916) 445-1970 ♦ anecita.agustinez@doj.ca.gov