



STATE OF IOWA

GOVERNOR TERRY E. BRANSTAD
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR KIM REYNOLDS

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
ROBERT C. KING, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Joint House and Human Services Appropriations Subcommittee 20 January 2015

The Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs is operating at a high operations tempo and meeting all department performance measures.

Our Mission is to serve Iowa's veterans and their families

Goals and Priorities

- Provide leadership to Department and assistance to county veterans service officers
- Educate our veterans and public about benefits and support network available
- Assist veterans and their families with benefit applications and individual issues
- Increase benefits received by Iowa's veterans and families through assistance provided by our office, the counties, and the various veterans service organization benefit specialists
- Strengthen partnerships and increase communications with veterans' partners
- Effectively manage budget and resources
- Improve the quality of training for county commissioners, county veterans service officers, and department staff
- Provide dignified services, compassionate family assistance, and high-quality operations at the Iowa Veterans Cemetery

Department Performance Measures

- 100% eligible - Veterans assist through Iowa Veterans Trust Fund
- 320 - Veterans receiving Iowa Military Homeowners Grant
- 100% eligible - Veterans receiving Injured Veterans Grant
- 95% County Veteran Service Officer qualification/certification
- 100% - County allocation funding utilized
- 100% - Accuracy of headstone inscriptions
- 100% - Timeliness of headstone placement

How We Accomplish Our Mission

- Department outreach program disseminates information to public and veterans regarding veteran/military events and benefits and services available
 - Department website
 - Bi-monthly events calendar with added major events announcements
 - Partnering with U.S. Veterans Affairs Regional Office, medical centers, Vet Centers, and others
 - Quarterly Department newsletter
- Assist veterans with benefit applications
- Promote community awareness of veterans' service and support local programs
- Provide direct care and assistance to veterans
 - Iowa Trust Fund
 - Injured Veterans Grant Program
 - County Allocation Program
 - Military Home Ownership Program via Iowa Finance Authority
- Maintain Iowa veterans' military service records and graves registration
- Operate and maintain the Iowa Veterans Cemetery

Iowa Veterans and Benefits (as of 31 December 2014)

- 233,815 Iowa veterans
- \$505,651,000 – Compensation and Pensions
- \$79,000,000 – Construction
- Education and Vocational Rehabilitation - \$74,079,000
- Medical Care - \$583,653,000
- Total - \$1,192,889,000 (US Veterans Affairs funding)
- Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Benefit Specialists Assistance (two employed at Camp Dodge and one at US Veterans Affairs Regional Office)
 - \$2.376M/month
 - Monthly sales tax revenue - \$142,574
 - Annual sales tax revenue - \$1.71M.
 - 2,590 beneficiaries (+63)
 - 5,080 powers of attorney (+82)

Iowa Veterans Cemetery

- State-owned and operated
- United States Department of Veteran Affairs National Cemetery Administration rules and guidelines
- Located 10 miles west of Des Moines at I-80 exit 113 (Van Meter)
- 100 acres; 50 acres developed
- Planned for 81,000 interments – in-ground full casket and cremated remains and columbaria walls
- Monday-Friday operations; four time slots available per day
- Open 365 days a year; sunrise to sunset
- Current staff of five – two cemetery representatives; three grounds operators
- 2,298 Interments a/o Tuesday, 20 January 2015

- 2008 – 293 (Include 75+ cremated remains received for interment prior to cemetery opening; interred first week)
- 2009 – 259
- 2010 – 321
- 2011 – 363
- 2012 – 350
- 2013 – 431
- 2014 – 487
- June 2014 – busiest month to date - 59 interments/21 available days
Week of 9 June – 21 interments – every time slot utilized plus one
- July 2014 - 48 interments/22 available days
- September 2014 – 50 interments/21 days
- October 2014 – 62 interments/23 days
- Current five-person staff is trained, extremely competent, loyal, professional and dedicated to the mission
- \$1.2M (\$919,612 United States Department of Veterans Affairs National Cemetery Administration Grant/\$250,000 FY-13 State Legislative Appropriation) Construction Program – completed
 - 960-capacity columbaria plaza
 - New pump house
 - New water filtration system
 - Vehicle storage building addition
- Appearance and maintenance improvements
- Concerned with operations tempo and current manning and personnel issues - increased activities, burials, expectations, and visibility

2013-2015 Department Accomplishments

- Relocation to new Camp Dodge location
- Department-wide communications and equipment upgrades
- Completion of Iowa Veterans Cemetery improvement program
- Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Wreaths Across America, and Iowa State Fair Veterans Day parade exceeded expectations for attendance and demonstrate increased patriotism in our communities
- Partnerships and communications are enhanced and growing outreach is increasing overall Department effectiveness
- County training program quality is markedly increased; instruction quality and presentation have been significantly enhanced
- Our Department is adding value to Iowa's communities through support and assistance to Iowa's veterans

Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs Appropriated Funding

- 2013 - \$1,025,819
 - \$137,940 – remodeling new Camp Dodge headquarters location
 - \$600,000 – grant to assist with construction of veterans' reception center to support Iowa Veterans Cemetery families
 - \$250,000 – matching funds for Iowa Veterans Cemetery construction program
- 2014 - 15 - \$1,095,951
- 2016 - 17 - \$1,200,546
 - \$50,539 – Administrative Assistant I (cemetery representative)
 - \$42,556 – Maintenance Worker II
 - \$11,600 – Audit payment
 - Executive Director concerns
 - Safety
 - Operational tempo
 - Planning for future