

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



Camp Dodge, Bldg. A6A, 7105 NW 70th Avenue, Johnston, IA 50131
515-242-5331 www.iowava.org

October – 2007

Fall School of Instruction

This year's school was the most attended in recent memory, with 163 Commissioners, Directors, and Administrators attending, representing 84 counties. The department was encouraged with the turnout and the discussions that occurred during the two and a half day event.

The Fall School of Instruction took place from October 16th through the 18th. Tuesday began with introductions of department staff and updates on the new County Grant Program, Regional Offices Feasibility Study, Veterans Trust Fund Rules, Veterans Commemorative Property Rules, Iowa Veterans Cemetery progress, Vietnam Bonus, and the Veterans Need Study. Don Tyne addressed the counties as outgoing President of the County Association and Darlene McMartin spoke as the President of the National Association. Other speakers in the morning included Dan Steen, Commandant of the Iowa Veterans Home, Lisa Breun from the VA Regional Office, Tony Smithhart from the US Department of Labor, and Jan Garner from Iowa DHS presented on Medicaid.

Following lunch on the first day, Commissioners were addressed on Iowa Code Chapter 35B and were updated on county issues and legislative priorities.

At the same time, Directors and Administrators had presentations on women's issues from Elizabeth Ledvina and a representative from the Iowa City Medical Center. Following that, there was a presentation on OEF/OIF issues from the VA Medical Centers and a compensation and pension overview from the VA Regional Office.



Don Tyne and Linda Schutz (Linn County), Susan Yario (Jones County), and John Hintz (Fayette County) waking up before the morning session.

Wednesday was a day of breakout sessions, where two groups of experienced Directors and Administrators rotated between a class on pension and compensation and a class on the appeals process.

New county staff received training in the provision of services to veterans in their office. This training was lead by Bob Steben, John Halstead, David Heim, all from IDVA, and Elizabeth Ledvina from Tama County.



County Directors and Administrators prepare for the afternoon class.

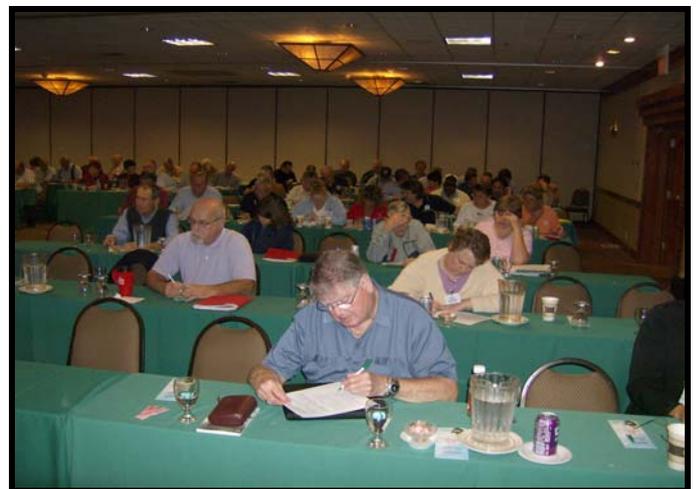


Day two breakout sessions with the VA Regional Office on pension and compensation (above) and appeals (below).



Break out session with a VA Hospital.

Finally, the school of instruction ended with a final exam and Directors and Administrators providing feedback on the event. ~



Class of instruction for new County Directors and Administrators.

(right) Taking the annual exam for certification and saying goodbye until the spring.



New County Association Officers

Following the first day of the school, the Iowa Association of County Commissioners of Veterans Affairs meet in district meetings and an annual business meeting. During these meetings, new officers and district directors were elected. The new positions are as follows:

Officers:

President - Elizabeth Ledvina, Tama
1st Vice President - John Hintz, Fayette
2nd Vice President - Dana Evans, Cherokee
Secretary - Louise Galbraith, Crawford
Treasurer - Patty Hamann, Cedar
Historian - Michelle Fitzgibbons, Dubuque
Sergeant At Arms - Ron Hersom, Palo Alto
Chaplain - Ernie Cupp, Dickinson
Past President - Don Tyne, Linn

District Directors

1st District - Sue Rich, Washington
2nd District - Patti Meyer, Buchanan
3rd District - Marci Hall-Jacobsen, Floyd
4th District - Mike Kuhn, Marion
5th District - Larry Sundall, Emmet
6th District - Joan Waller, Clay
7th District - Jerry Hansen, Montgomery



New Board Officers and District Directors.

Front - Don Tyne (Linn). Second (l-r) - Patti Meyer (Buchanan), Patty Hamann (Cedar), Joan Waller (Clay). Third (l-r) - Elizabeth Ledvina (Tama), Louise Galbraith (Crawford), Ernie Cupp (Dickenson), Michelle Fitzgibbons (Dubuque), Sue Rich (Washington), Jerry Hansen (Montgomery). Back (l-r) - John Hintz (Fayette), Marci Hall-Jacobsen (Floyd), Dana Evans (Cherokee), Larry Sundall (Emmet), Ron Hersom (Palo Alto). Not pictured - Mike Kuhn (Marion).

Veterans Commemorative Property Rules Update

IDVA has completed the administrative rules pertaining to the sale, trade, or transfer of memorials that are at least 75 years and placed in cemeteries to commemorate veterans.

The proposed rules were submitted to the State of Iowa on October 4, 2007 and will be published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin on October 24th. Persons interested in commenting on the proposed rules can contact IDVA or attend a public hearing at Camp Dodge on November 13th from 3-4 pm.

Following the public hearing, input generated will be looked at for incorporation. The final rules will then be adopted and filed on November 30th and effective on January 23, 2008. ~



Darlene McMartin, President of the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers (NACVSO), Patrick Palmersheim, Director of the Iowa Department of Veterans Affairs, and Elizabeth Ledvina, newly elected President of the Iowa Association of County Commissioners of Veterans Affairs (IACCVA).

Iowa Veterans Cemetery

On Tuesday, October 16th, the Dallas County Board of Supervisors approved a resolution to rename the county road that provides access to the cemetery. The road's name was changed from "R Avenue," to "Veterans Memorial Drive." This new name will be a fitting tribute to the men and women interred at the cemetery and will provide an additional remembrance for those visiting the facility.



Following the Board of Supervisors' meeting renaming "R Avenue" to "Veterans Memorial Drive." Pictured left to right, Supervisor Mark Hanson, Supervisor Bob Ockerman, Supervisor Brad Golightly, and Cemetery Director Steve Young.

As of October 22, the Iowa Veterans Cemetery has 22 cremated remains awaiting interment and 295 approved applications.

Construction has been hampered due to consistent rain. However, forms have been placed for pouring concrete at the committal shelter and administration building. The curbing has been completed for the roads and gravel has been laid in preparation for asphalt. There is continuing progress on the removal of dead trees and brush on the cemetery grounds and live trees are being trimmed to beautify the standing groves. ~

Visit us on the Web

www.iowava.org

Ideas for a newsletter article?

Contact kent.hartwig@iowa.gov



Recent picture of the cemetery grounds.

County Grant Program

The fiscal year 2008 County Grant Program was rolled out on Tuesday, October 16th and applications are currently being accepted.

In order to facilitate the new program, the IDVA rules were amended to improve the existing grant program and to reflect current legislation that includes changes to the appropriation for the grant program.

Revisions were also made to provide that beginning with the fiscal year 2009 grant program, funding will be awarded only for the provision of increased services to veterans over and above the services provided in the previous fiscal year. In addition, the new rule establishes an application time line, a process for emergency applications, and a process for applications received after appropriated funding is expended. The rule also clarifies that, beginning with the fiscal year 2008 grant, distributed funds must be expended in the fiscal year in which they are appropriated. Finally, these rules provide clarification on reporting requirements to the department and change the final reporting date for counties to 30 days following the end of the fiscal year from the specific date and year previously required.

IDVA hopes these changes will provide for a clearer process and will facilitate a July 1st start date for the fiscal year 2009 program.

~

Veterans Need Study

In September, the Iowa Veterans Commission established a subcommittee to be the point of contact on decisions for the creation of a request for proposal (RFP) for the Veterans Need Study. The “scope of work” for the RFP has been completed, and the final document should be completed by the end of October.

This study will be funded through the Commission’s veterans license plates fund and when completed, will provide a comprehensive study on the existing needs and deficiencies of veterans benefits at the local, state, and federal level. ~

Veterans Trust Fund

The Veterans Trust Fund rules were “Adopted and Filed” with the State of Iowa on October 4th. The final rule language will be published in the Administrative Code Bulletin on October 24th and will become effective on November 28th.

IDVA is currently working on the application forms needed to begin distributing these dollars. There will be three separate forms: the first will address all applications that have income and asset limitations, the second will pertain to family and children support units, and the third will be for honor guard reimbursements. These applications will be distributed to counties and the Iowa Veterans Commission in mid November. Completed applications will then be sent to IDVA for an initial screening and recommendation to the Commission. The Commission will then vote on whether to authorize the funds. These votes will take place at regular quarterly Commission meetings or during conference calls, which are open to the public, for the express purpose of voting on trust fund expenditures. ~

Vietnam Veterans Bonus

As of October 24th, IDVA has received and processed 712 applications for the second Vietnam Bonus Program. The average bonus amount is \$197.17, with sixty-six percent of the applications having been awarded a bonus. To date IDVA has distributed \$87,349.24. ~

Regional Veterans Affairs

Offices Study

The input phase from counties for the Regional Offices Study has been completed. To date, the county survey was returned by 66 counties, with some counties providing input from multiple individuals. Also, two meetings were held to receive input and to answer questions. These meetings were held in Clinton County on October 5th and in Des Moines during the Fall School of Instruction. Although the responses were mostly opposed to creating regional offices, many counties offered opinions that will help the department craft the report to the legislature.

The department will begin drafting the report in conjunction with Workforce Development in the coming weeks for the January 1st deadline. ~

Microsoft Office 2007 Upgrade

Earlier this month, the State of Iowa converted all departments to Microsoft Office 2007. Unfortunately, older versions of Office do not convert the new version’s documents if not saved in a particular way. IDVA is aware of the problem and will strive to ensure that documents sent out will be in the proper form for recipients to read. However, as we are proceeding, if you receive a document that is unreadable, please let us know and we will resend it to you. Thanks for your understanding in this matter. ~

**NEVER IN THE HISTORY OF THE
WORLD HAS ANY SOLDIER
SACRIFICED MORE FOR THE
FREEDOM AND LIBERTY OF
TOTAL STRANGERS THAN THE
AMERICAN SOLDIER.**

**– SENATOR ZELL MILLER (D)
GEORGIA 2004**

New Veteran License Plates

The 2007 legislature created seven new license plates, including a Gold Star plate and plates for the recipients of the Distinguished Service Cross, the Navy Cross, the Air Force Cross, the Soldier's Medal, the Navy and Marine Corp Cross, or the Airman's Medal. These plates have been designed by the Department of Transportation and will be available beginning January 1, 2008. The plates will cost \$25 with an annual renewal fee of \$5. The plate fees will be placed in the Veterans License Fee Fund. ~

IDVA Receptionist

Please join IDVA in welcoming Jeanna Hampel as the new receptionist for the department. Jeanna has been working as the temporary assistant for the Iowa Veterans Cemetery since July 1st. She took the full time position with the department in mid October. ~

**“Our Liberties we Prize and
Our Rights we will Maintain.”**

IDVA Staff Contact Information

Patrick J. Palmersheim
Executive Director

Patrick.Palmersheim@iowa.gov

242-5333

Mari Mielke

Executive Secretary to the Director

Mari.Mielke@iowa.gov

242-0021

Bob Steben

Executive Officer 1

Bob.Steben@iowa.gov

242-0153

Kent Hartwig

Executive Officer 1

Kent.Hartwig@iowa.gov

242-0031

John Halstead

Veterans Benefits Specialist

John.Halstead@iowa.gov

242-5327

David Heim

Veterans Benefits Specialist

David.Heim@iowa.gov

242-5329

Jill Joseph

Administrative Assistant

Jill.Joseph@iowa.gov

242-0033

Cristen Stevens

Administrative Assistant

Cristen.Stevens@iowa.gov

242-0027

Bob Betz

Clerk Specialist

Bob.Betz@iowa.gov

242-0160

Jeanna Hampel

Receptionist

Jeanna.Hampel@idva.state.ia.us

242-5276

--CEMETERY STAFF--

Steve Young

Cemetery Director

Steve.Young@idva.state.ia.us

242-5338