



CAVHCS Announces New Health Care Center

Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System (CAVHCS) announced the authorization to initiate the proposal process for a new 112,000 square foot, leased outpatient clinic in Montgomery, Ala., during a press conference today.

Delivering on a promise to provide for those who have borne the battle, Montgomery's new VA Health Care Center will have an aggressive construction schedule, and is planned to begin providing direct health care support to area Veterans in late 2012, with a lease scheduled to run through 2032.

The new 112,000 square foot, 650-parking space facility will also facilitate the modernization of health care services available to Alabama's growing Veteran population. Montgomery's new Health Care Center will consolidate

Primary and Specialty Care clinics and include integration of Mental Health components along with all ancillary and diagnostic support services. This



CAVHCS Director Glen E. Struchtemeyer announces the approval to initiate the procurement process, and details of the anticipated timeframe for the new Health Care Center in Montgomery, Ala. during a recent press conference as Montgomery Mayor, the Honorable Todd Strange (right) looks on. (Image by Robin Johnson)

consolidation will not only result in increased efficiency, but will also afford an opportunity for the modernization of the existing Montgomery VA Medical Center.

A complete list of specific parameters of the bid proposal process will soon be available on www.fedbizopps.gov. However, some specifics include; the delineated area of consideration will be within a 10-mile radius of the Montgomery VA Medical Center on Perry Hill Road; the 112,000 usage square foot space must earn the Federal Government's Energy Star label; there will be at least 650 parking

**Please see
'New HHC'**

Page 5

CAVHCS Volunteer Efforts '69,000 Hours' Recognized

CAVHCS volunteers, who work tirelessly to help provide direct support, care and assistance to Veterans, were recently honored during National Volunteer Week. CAVHCS Director, Glen E. Struchtemeyer was on hand to personally acknowledge volunteer contributions throughout the year.

This year's National Volunteer Week theme, "Volunteers Build a Better World" reflects the vital roles volunteers play in all facets of CAVHCS, American life and the growing value of their service.

"Volunteers perform countless acts of service and are one of America's most valuable assets," said William Petty, CAVHCS Chief of Voluntary Services. "During the past year, our CAVHCS volunteers have donated more than 69,000 hours of service to the Veterans we care for and their families. National Volunteer Week is the ideal time to honor volunteers meeting community and Veteran needs and calling the public's attention to their tremendous contributions."

During National Volunteer Week, VA volunteers nationwide received presidential recognition for their service to Veterans. Like National Volunteer Week, VA awards seek to inspire by example, honoring the service of our country's most committed volunteers and sharing their achievements to encourage more volunteerism.

"We've done the math and it's impressive," said Petty. "Our volunteers fill CAVHCS needs in a tangible way

that we've been able to calculate. CAVHCS volunteers provide support that – if we had to pay an employee – equates to more than \$1,200,000. That's serious money."

National Volunteer Week began in 1974 when President Richard Nixon signed an executive order

**Please see
'Volunteers'**

Page 5



CAVHCS Director Glen E. Struchtemeyer (back row, right) expressed his personal appreciation and provided individual recognition to CAVHCS Volunteers recently during luncheons celebrating National Volunteer Week. (Image by Robin Johnson)

CAVHCS All-Stars

This is to inform the Director and the Chief of Staff Offices of what great employees they have at the Tuskegee VA! Don't take this the wrong way when I say there are lots of good employees that work there but this person STANDS out from all the rest.

When I first met Mrs. James, I was at a loss trying to find which hallway I needed to access to get to my clinic and every time I stopped by her door she would tell me "you're in the right hallway Mr. Irvin". I can still feel the smile on her face when she pops on the grin of support.

She even comes on her lunch break and helps the blind and impaired set their lunches up when we have programs. Mrs. James is what the VA needs because she is dedicated to her job and goes above and beyond the call to serve us Veterans! Please give her a "Pat on the back" from me and all the Veterans who use the Tuskegee VA facility.

-- Sincerely, Mr. Ross I.

We visited the Pharmacy today regarding a medication which had not been mailed. We spoke with Debbie Wade, who was very nice, professional and helpful. May God bless her for what she does. You need more workers like her!

-- Respectfully, Andrew C. H. Montgomery, Ala.

Please convey my thanks to the Director. I would like to express my appreciation for the staff that he has in the C&P clinic. Mr. Ray and the other staff members have always gone above and beyond their duties to ensure that I was taken care of in the best manner possible. Several times my files have been misplaced or I was not notified of an appointment or not scheduled altogether. I have felt that at times I was on the "back burner" with the VA. When these instances have occurred, the staff has bent over backward to offer their assistance and ensure that I was taken care of with the utmost respect in every manner. I have been on appeal for 7½ years to date and though I do not have a lot of confidence in the staff members of the VA and the appeals process, I can say that I do truly appreciate the personnel at the Montgomery VA installation.

-- Sincerely, Mark E. O., Graceville, Fla.

Brittany Borders is a very special lady. We are in the process of doing our Living wills and she made it very easy and comfortable for us to process. The VA needs more great people like this young lady, always concerned about the Veterans! -- Vivian and Tom R., Millbrook, Ala.

Mr. Larry Ray was very helpful and very courteous with helping my husband – Billy P. with his case today. He answered all our questions and gave us helpful information regarding his treatment. He seems to be a good asset to this office and a good worker at the VA. Please convey our thanks to him.

-- Sincerely, Billy and Frances P.

Ready, Set, Go!

2010
VA All Employee
Survey
April 19 – May 10

*Do It for Yourself.
Do It for the Veterans.
Do It for a Better VA!*

Your Opinion Matters at VA!

The VA All Employee Survey collects information on your perceptions of your workplace and your satisfaction at work. **Provide your opinions about pay, recognition, praise, management, promotions and many other issues.** By voicing your opinion, **you can influence the future** of VA! Teams at your facility will analyze the results of the survey and make changes where needed.

It is completely confidential and anonymous. Completing the survey is **voluntary** for all VA employees, but your help in responding to the survey is very important!

For more information, contact your local VA All Employee Survey Coordinator:

Donna Mackey-Pollard, AES Coordinator Ext. 2634
Cynthia Hopper, HR Coordinator (M) Ext. 4920
Cynthia Hill, HR Coordinator (T) Ext. 3002

This survey is part of an ongoing effort to assess employees' satisfaction, to eliminate barriers to employees' effectiveness, and to make VA an employer of choice.

The CAVHCS Salute



Accredited by
The Joint Commission

The CAVHCS Salute is produced by the Central Alabama Veterans Health Care (CAVHCS) Public Affairs Office. CAVHCS Salute is an unofficial, internal communications publication.

Director
Associate Director
Acting Associate Director, Patient Care Services
Chief of Staff
Public Affairs Officer

Glen E. Struchtemeyer
Anita F. Willard, MPH
Carolyn Caver-Gordon
Cliff Robinson, MD
Al Bloom

Employees of the Month

Ms. Angela Derico

*Beneficiary Travel,
Montgomery Campus*



Ms. Derico is a clerk in the Business Office Beneficiary Travel Section. She has performed admirably in her duties despite the section being undermanned during a dramatic increase in Veteran traffic to her office. Ms. Derico processes, on average, more than 240 pay vouchers worth an estimated \$14,000 per day. She also assists in arranging ambulance transportation to other VA Medical Centers in the Southeast and to local health care facilities.

A Veteran who had been waiting a long time for a voucher came up and stated that he wanted to know how long these lines would continue and before he could receive and answer stated that he “knew we were trying to do our best to get more people, but as long as Angela can keep smiling and keep that good attitude, I don’t mind waiting.” This example of her “can-do” attitude is an inspiration to all. Never a groan, always a smile and a willingness to get the job done whatever it takes. We need more people like Angela.

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

VA Utilizes Stimulus Funding to Repair Historic Monuments

The Department of Veterans Affairs will use up to \$4.4 million in funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act program to repair and preserve historic monuments and memorials at VA-operated national cemeteries, soldiers’ lots and other facilities throughout the United States.

“The Recovery Act will help us preserve these historic memorials for future generations,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “In many cases, these irreplaceable historic structures will receive long overdue repairs while keeping skilled American artisans employed on projects important to our heritage.” Funds for the monument and memorial repairs are coming from more than \$1.4 billion in the Recovery Act allocated to VA.

Forty-nine monuments at 36 sites in 23 states will be repaired or conserved under this program. These represent some of the oldest and most significant memorials at VA cemeteries, and require treatments that include cleaning, roof and step repairs, stone consolidation, joint repointing, and painting or waxing of metals.

The most costly preservation project is the National Soldiers’ Monument at Dayton National Cemetery in Ohio. The Soldiers’ Monument dominates the landscape from atop a mound at the center of the cemetery. The cornerstone was laid in 1873 and it was completed in 1877. This dramatic structure is composed of a 30-foot marble column on a granite base and topped with a soldier at parade rest.

At the corners of the base are four figures representing the infantry, cavalry, artillery and Navy. President Rutherford B. Hayes delivered the dedication address on Sept. 12, 1877, to a crowd of about 22,000. This



Ms. Bessie Cooper Harris

*Engineering Service,
Tuskegee Campus*



It has been a tremendous pleasure to work with Ms. Cooper Harris through some very complex maintenance/renovation projects under her coordination. Her compassion for Veterans, her talents in leadership and coordination, her pleasant personality and ability to work well with all individuals and her attention to detail have prompted this acknowledgement.

Ms. Cooper Harris has worked with GEC&R on many occasions related to our patient care areas. What really stands out is the latest project she coordinated for Building 120. This project required moving through the middle of clinics and waiting areas, without displacing a single Veteran throughout the entire project.

Ms. Cooper Harris is one of those individuals what works behind the scenes and makes things happen. GEC&R is grateful to her for the exceptional work she did with the Building 120 construction project.

monument was severely vandalized in 1990, and the current initiative will address problems associated with the repair.

VA will also use ARRA funds to conserve the soldiers’ obelisk monuments at cemeteries affiliated with the National Homes for Disabled Veteran Soldiers.

The Recovery Act, signed into law by President Obama on Feb. 17, 2009, is an unprecedented effort to jumpstart the American economy, create and save millions of jobs, and put a down payment on addressing long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century. In addition to repairs to monuments and memorials, America’s national cemeteries will receive an estimated:

- \$25.9 million for national shrine projects to raise, realign, and clean headstones or grave markers and repair sunken graves at various locations across the country;
- \$5.9 million for energy-related projects such as conserving energy and water through the use of wind turbines, solar power and other measures;
- \$9.5 million to repair roads, buildings, and other cemetery infrastructure at locations nationwide; and
- Nearly \$6 million for equipment purchases for cemetery operations.

VA operates 131 national cemeteries in 39 states and Puerto Rico and 33 soldiers’ lots and monument sites. More than three million Americans, including Veterans of every war and conflict - from the Revolutionary War to the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan -are buried in VA’s national cemeteries on more than 19,000 acres of land.

CAVHCS Photo Gallery

Images by Eric Johnson

Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System (CAVHCS), in collaboration with several Veteran and community organizations, presented a Homeless Veterans Stand Down April 17th in the Columbus Convention and Trade Center, Columbus, Ga.

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) partners with hundreds of communities on Stand Downs across the nation. Stand Downs give homeless Veterans a temporary refuge where they can obtain food, shelter, clothing and a range of community and VA assistance.

Some of the CAVHCS services participating include; Women's Wellness Program; Veterans Industries, Medical Screenings, Minority Veterans Program, Substance Abuse Treatment Program, Seamless Transition Program, Social Work Services, OEF/OIF Program, Dental Service, Suicide Prevention Education and The Health Care for Homeless Veterans Program (HCHV) Grant and Per Diem Program and the Domiciliary for Homeless Veterans program.



What's New with the Thrift Savings Plan (TSP)?

April is Financial Literacy Month - a good time to review your retirement savings strategy. Check out Executive Director Gregory Long's letter on this topic, as well as the April 2010 TSP Highlights.

Tax-deferred benefit of the TSP - When you prepared your 2009 tax return, hopefully you remembered that your taxable wages reported on your W-2 will be different from your annual salary. Your TSP contributions are tax deferred (or may be tax exempt for some members of the uniformed services) and are not considered part of your income for Federal income tax purposes. Paying less tax on your current income is one of the benefits of the TSP.

Tax Credit - If you participated in the TSP during tax year 2009, you may be eligible to claim the Retirement Savings Contributions Credit, as long as your modified adjusted gross income for 2009 is not more than \$55,500 if married filing jointly, \$41,625 if head of household, or \$27,750 if you are single or married filing separately, or a qualifying widow or widower.

April 2010 TSP Quarterly Highlights is posted on the TSP Web site at www.tsp.gov/forms/highlights/high10b.pdf. The publication contains information on "A Tale of Two Investors" and other information on investing your money.

For additional information regarding the TSP and Plan News, visit the TSP Web site at www.tsp.gov and click on "What's New."

Questions regarding the TSP Program should be directed to the Human Resources staff, Sharon Pearson at Ext. 3009, Donna Mackey-Pollard at Ext. 2643, or Gail Rowan at Ext. 4743.



Southeast Network Director, Dr. Lawrence Biro cut the ceremonial ribbon recently along with Ms. Lakeisha King (left), Palliative Care Coordinator and Tonya Spann-Davis (right), Nurse Manager, to open the new 10-bed, Palliative Care Wing of the Community Living Center (CLC) on CAVHCS' Tuskegee Campus.

‘Volunteers’

From Page 1

establishing an annual celebration of volunteering. Every president since has signed a proclamation promoting the week.

“We hope that the recognition we provide during National Volunteer Week will motivate others to volunteer their time and talent,” said Petty. “The thing is that most of our volunteers will tell you they don’t need this kind of recognition to keep contributing to CAVHCS, but to me – it’s the least we can do, and everybody like to know their efforts are appreciated.”



CAVHCS Director Glen E. Struchtemeyer expressed his personal appreciation and provided individual recognition to CAVHCS Volunteers recently during luncheons celebrating National Volunteer Week. (Images by Robin Johnson)

Women Veterans Honored

Three nurses who served in World War II were recently honored in a special women veterans ceremony in Bismarck, N.D. Mildred Vernon, Lorraine Froehlich and Delores Henke were each given bronze medals designed by Linda Marquart, VA Women Veteran Program Manager at the VA Medical Center in Fargo, N.D. Vernon’s grandson, Owen, a Marine Corps veteran, had mentioned to Marquart in passing that his grandmother had served as a Second Lieutenant in the Army Nurse Corps after completing her nurse’s training.

Marquart told him that his grandmother deserved a medal for her service, which she created to do something special for these women. Serving in the military was not always “the thing to do” back in the 1940s, said Marquart, but these women chose to serve and paved the way for the careers of military women serving today.



Vernon, who enlisted in June 1945, was stationed at Fort Francis Warren near Cheyenne, Wyo. She took care of wounded American soldiers brought back from the Pacific Theater after the war ended, as well as a German POWs interned locally.

Henke, a native of Kidder County, N.D., served in Oregon, Washington and California during her service, and Froehlich, who enlisted in 1943 at the age of 20, served in North Carolina, including Camp Lejeune.

‘New HHC’

From Page 1

spaces and the lease will run through 2032.

Veterans in Central Alabama have been served by VA Medical Centers in Tuskegee and Montgomery since 1923 and 1939, respectively. Expanding while maintaining services is one of the fundamental operating guidelines or promises made by Central Alabama Veterans Health Care System. Recent Department of Veterans Affairs projections have identified Alabama as having the sixth most rapidly expanding Veteran population. The new Montgomery Health Care Center along with the expansion of services in Fort Rucker, Ala. and Columbus, Ga. as well as a new Community Based Outpatient Clinic planned to open in Monroe County, Ala. later this year, are all designed to provide increased health care services to Veterans in Central Alabama and Western Georgia.



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CAVHCS Director Glen E. Struchtemeyer discusses the anticipated timeframe of the new Health Care Center in Montgomery, Ala. announced during a recent press conference as Montgomery Mayor, the Honorable Todd Strange looks on. (Image by Robin Johnson)

May

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 National Physical Fitness and Sports Month www.fitness.gov National Mental Health Month www.nmha.org Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month asianpacificheritage.gov National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month www.nof.org Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection & Prevention Month www.aad.org Allergy and Asthma Awareness Month www.aafa.org/awarenessmonth
2 National Stroke Awareness Month www.stroke.org Women's Health Care Month www.womenshealth.gov High Blood Pressure Awareness Month www.nhlbi.nih.gov Arthritis Awareness Month www.arthritis.org Oncology Nursing Month www.onsfoundation.org	3	4	5	 National Nurses Day	7 May 6-12, National Nurses Week www.nursingworld.org	8
9	10 Older Americans Month www.aoa.gov Trauma Awareness Month www.amtrauma.org National Police Week www.aphf.org National Women's Health Week www.womenshealth.gov National Hospital Week www.aha.org National Nursing Home Week www.nnhw.org	11	12	13	14	15
16 National Emergency Medical Services Week www.acep.org	17	18	 Employee Health Fitness Day	20	21	22
23 30	 MEMORIAL DAY	25	 National Veterans Golden Age Games www.veteransgoldenagegames.va.gov			

The CAVHCS Community Calendar is not intended to be an all-inclusive, official calendar. It is intended rather to provide a medium for CAVHCS Salute to share upcoming events.

If you would like to add a CAVHCS event please email details directly to alan.bloom@va.gov. Submissions are not guaranteed to be published. Editorial considerations will be made for propriety, promptness and print space.