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 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 spots.

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.
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.
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 understaffed 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 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.
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](http://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](http://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.
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.
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.