

# *STATE OF COLORADO*

## DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS



## STRATEGIC PLAN FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011 – 2012

*H. Michael Edwards*

Major General, Colorado Air National Guard  
The Adjutant General and Executive Director

# Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs

## Strategic Plan

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## 1. Executive Director Letter

# STATE OF COLORADO

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## DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

6848 South Revere Parkway  
Centennial, Colorado 80112  
Phone (720) 250-1500  
Fax (720) 250-1519



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Bill Ritter  
Governor

Major General  
H. Michael Edwards  
The Adjutant General

### Executive Director's Letter

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs has been largely focused on the primary mission of the largest Division within the Department, the Colorado National Guard. That primary mission, of course, is to augment the active duty military forces when so ordered by the President. Since 9/11, the Colorado National Guard has had personnel and equipment continuously deployed in support of Homeland Security and overseas in the prosecution of the Global War on Terrorism. Over 2300 members of the Army National Guard and 1300 from the Air National Guard have been deployed at least once—and many have deployed three or four times. While Air National Guard deployments have remained about 60 days in length about every 18 months, the Army National Guard deployments are now limited to 12 months about every four years. Of the approximately 5,500 members of the National Guard, about 600 are deployed at any one time. The remaining available personnel within the state have been able to respond to their second mission, that of responding to disasters when called by the Governor. For the Democratic National Convention, over 2100 personnel and 200 vehicles were on standby to assist local

authorities as necessary. I point this out to assure the citizens of Colorado that in spite of the War, we are able to respond to the needs of the State.

In spite of the frequent deployments and family and career disruption, our recruiting efforts have managed to keep the force structure at nearly 100 percent of the authorized strength. Army Guard recruiting success has resulted in the addition of an 800 plus man Infantry Battalion which is now forming in Grand Junction, Colorado Springs, Alamosa, Ft. Lupton and we hope soon in Windsor. By adding this infantry force to these new locations, we gain a greater community presence and improve our ability to respond to state emergencies.

The Division of Veterans Affairs has also felt the impact of the Global War on Terrorism as the number of new veterans, many of them Guardsmen and Reservists, qualify for benefits. In addition to this growing caseload, they have been participating in transition assistance programs to explain veteran benefits to those returning from deployments. This workload is added to one that was already growing from the health problems experienced by our aging Korean and Vietnam era veterans. The Division was able to replace its antiquated caseload management system with one that meets the expanding needs of our case officers. Beyond just the Division however, there is a greater awareness and concern with the health care issues of our returning veterans, and while the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is the responsible agency, they are in some cases ill-equipped to deal with new problems. I remain pleased with several of the initiatives from the General Assembly as well as the many non-profit organizations seeking to help our deserving veterans.

The Division of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) is somewhat similar to the National Guard in that its 14 powered aircraft, three gliders, and 19 vehicles are provided through the National CAP; but the State provides important financial support for aircraft maintenance and operations. Since CAP is an all-volunteer organization, the State also provides one full-time paid employee. In Fiscal 2010, the Colorado Civil Air Patrol flew more than 3000 hours in support of Search and Rescue, Cadet Programs, and Aerospace Education in Colorado. Furthermore, Colorado was among the leading Wings in the Nation with 66 rescue missions in Fiscal 2010. The nearly 2000 volunteers of the Colorado Civil Air Patrol proudly serve their communities and the State of Colorado by attending regular training events and meetings, as well as conducting self-guided proficiency flights in preparation for Emergency Services missions. The Wing received an "EXCELLENT" rating during the 2009 Air Force Evaluated Search and Rescue Exercise. In addition, Colorado Wing has demonstrated superior property accountability by receiving an "EXCELLENT" rating on the 2010 Survey

Audit – an inspection conducted by our Air Force partner to verify proper accounting for non-expendable assets. Colorado Wing was recognized with the 2008 Counterdrug/Homeland Security Award for Rocky Mountain Region, and was named the National Drug Demand Reduction Wing of the Year in both 2008 and 2009 for outreach efforts that have touched more than 100,000 citizens across Colorado. In 2010, Colorado Wing was recognized as the outstanding Cadet Programs Wing in Rocky Mountain Region. Colorado's cadet program has grown to more than 1,000 cadets. The National Squadron of Distinction (top Cadet or Composite Squadron in all of Civil Air Patrol) for 2010 is Colorado Wing's Broomfield Composite Squadron. Citizen volunteers of the Civil Air Patrol also participate in Homeland Security Exercises together with the Air National Guard. CAP and the Army National Guard also work together with State and County authorities in Counter Drug missions, helping to stem the trade of illicit drugs in the state of Colorado.

The economic downturn and resultant budget reductions have a significant impact on the Department. In making reductions, we have sought to save positions as the Department staff is small, with many one or two person functional areas—such as human relations, payroll and budget. In these cases, personnel reductions eliminate a critical function. We have therefore taken reductions in maintenance operations—for the Army National Guard, Air National Guard and the Division of Veterans Affairs. This will translate into reduced building maintenance and reduced training of County Veteran Service Officers. The result will be deferred maintenance on buildings and reduced ability to train County Veteran Service Officers. The Division of Civil Air Patrol budget was not reduced since their budget was nearly halved in 2003 and has never been restored to 2002 budget levels.

The economic downturn has also placed at risk the newly acquired infantry battalion. Through the support of veterans and the General Assembly through HB 10-1140, we have been able to begin construction on the Grand Junction Readiness Center and begin to acquire land for the Windsor and Alamosa Readiness Centers. The federal government has appropriated and programmed nearly \$60M in federal funds for construction of new armories for the Infantry Battalion. The State must match the construction budget for Windsor and Alamosa with 25% State funds. I do not think that the State can afford to lose the \$8 million in salaries that this unit generates nor the nearly \$60M in federal military construction dollars that the armory construction would bring. We will work closely with the Governor and General Assembly fund the required State share of the Readiness Center construction.

H. Michael Edwards  
Major General, Colorado Air National Guard  
The Adjutant General and Executive Director

## **2. Introduction**

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs consists of three functionally related but separate divisions:

1. National Guard, the federally recognized state military force comprised of approximately 4000 Army National Guard and 1500 Air National Guard personnel.
2. The Division of Civil Air Patrol consisting of one state employee to provide support to the almost 2000 volunteer members of the Colorado Wing, Civil Air Patrol which is under the operational and administrative control of the National Civil Air Patrol.
3. The Division of Veterans Affairs which consists of State Veterans Service Officers and the Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado. The Division supports the Board of Veterans Affairs, a seven member board appointed by the Governor and reporting to the Governor and General Assembly as a Type II Board through the Adjutant General.

The National Guard exists primarily to augment the national active duty forces when so ordered by the President. It is this mission that generates the equipment, manpower authorizations and training provided by the federal government. From the perspective of Colorado citizens, these trained people living in the community provide the State with an important resource to respond to natural disasters or other State needs for security and protection. However, when they serve in this State capacity, the State must fund the pay and must “rent” the equipment from the federal government. The State also has a responsibility to provide, operate, and maintain readiness centers (armories) and other facilities for the units. The federal government assists in these functions by means of a Master Cooperative Agreement that specifies State and Federal funding shares for construction, operations and maintenance. About eighty percent of all Guardsmen train one weekend per month and 15 days in the summer. (However, as noted in the Executive Director’s letter, many have been deployed in support of the federal mission at least once in the past five years.) The remaining twenty percent are all full time federal employees—charged with planning, training, administration and maintaining equipment. They provide an important, but very limited, immediate response capability. While the Army National Guard is spread out in armories/communities literally across the State, the Air Guard is primarily located at Buckley Air Force Base in Aurora (F-16 fighter mission), Greeley Air Station (space warning mission) and Peterson Air Force Base in Colorado Springs (executive airlift mission).

The Division of Veterans Affairs serves as the “hub” of a network of Veterans Service Officers and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. They provide training and certification for County Veterans Service Officers who then assist veterans in the counties to

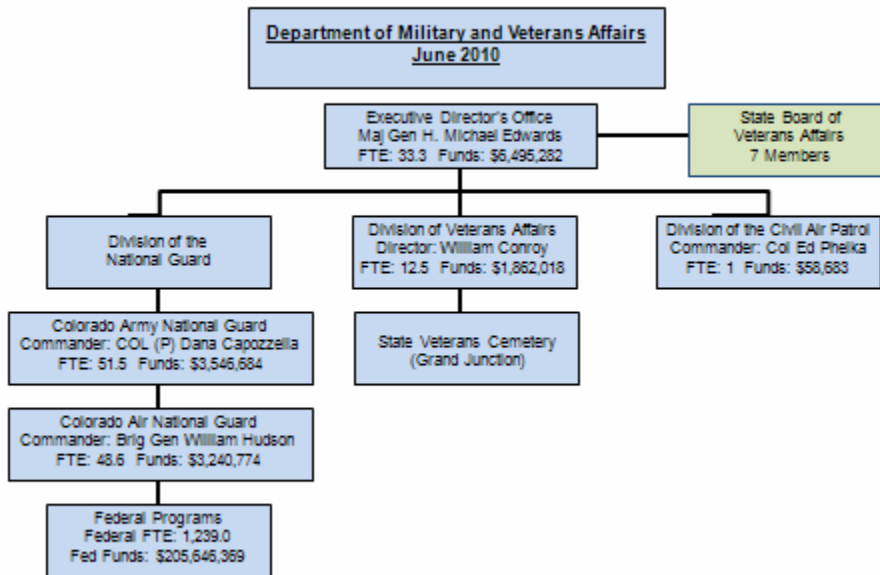
obtain benefits they have earned from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs. The network thus has responsibility for providing claim support services to the over 427,000 veterans, registered with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs residing in the state of Colorado. The division has five Veterans Service Officers and monitors and supports the activities of over sixty County Veterans Service Officers. The Division also manages the Veterans' Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado located in Grand Junction. The Cemetery was inaugurated on 17 July 2002. The cemetery conducts on average of five interments per week and has a total of more than 1400 veterans, spouses and dependents interred. The Division also supports the activities of the State Board of Veterans Affairs. The Board provides advice on veterans' needs and issues to the Adjutant General and the General Assembly. It also administers the grants program derived from funds in the Veterans Trust Fund which derives its annual funding from the Master Tobacco Settlement.

The Division of Civil Air Patrol supports the Colorado Wing with its 14 Cessna and 1 Gippsland GA-8 search aircraft and ground search vehicles and the Cadet program for 12-21 year olds. The senior squadrons provide trained volunteer pilots and observers across the State who can respond to national and state missions for search and rescue, transport and homeland security missions. The Cadet Squadrons provide aerospace education and activities in a structured "military" environment and exist all over Colorado. The Division provides important financial and administrative support to the activities of the Wing.

### **3. Federal and State Statutory Authority:**

The Department functions under the authority of Title 28 Colorado Revised Statutes (2009), Title 32, United States Code (2009)(National Guard) and Title 38, United States Code (2009)(Veterans).

#### 4. Organizational Chart





## **5. Department Mission:**

To provide day-to-day command and control, guidance, policies, and administrative and logistics support to the Divisions of the National Guard, Division of Veterans Affairs and Civil Air Patrol. By statute, that support includes safekeeping and management of military real estate, veterans cemetery, equipment, facilities and buildings; publishing necessary regulations, orders and reports; maintaining records; and hiring personnel to carry out those missions.

## **6. Five Year Vision:**

As the Department moves ahead through the next five years, the needs of the three divisions are fairly clear. Within the National Guard, needs are improving facilities and increasing manpower. In Veterans Affairs, the growing health needs of an aging veterans' population and the needs of the new generation of veterans from the Global War on Terrorism will be a focus. The Civil Air Patrol will focus on restoration of their 2001 funding support levels.

### National Guard

A key Department statutory requirement is to build and maintain armories. The average age of the Department's armories is approaching fifty years and many do not meet current safety code requirements. While some of these requirements are being addressed through controlled maintenance, many of the facilities are no longer suitable for unit training. In many cases, such as Canon City, Boulder, Longmont and Sterling, this is because what was outside the city fifty years ago is now surrounded by urban growth. We will seek to replace these armories with better situated modern facilities that better meet the unit training needs.

The Army and the Colorado Army National Guard (COARNG) are expanding to meet future needs of the Global War on Terrorism. The COARNG has begun manning a light infantry battalion of 809 personnel in six companies. This will bring about \$8 million in income and \$380,000 in additional income tax revenue to the state. However, armories/facilities for this battalion create both opportunity and challenge.

The opportunity is to reestablish or reinforce the Department's presence in key Colorado communities by building new facilities. The challenge will be funding. The federal government will provide nearly \$62 million in funds during the next four years. In the past, the Department has used proceeds from sales of existing property for the state share. There is no surplus property remaining to sell, and the properties sold recently do not begin to make up the 25% state share for construction of a new facility. Thus, the Department must compete for scarce Capital Construction funds. We must capitalize on our partnership with the veterans community and the General Assembly. By creating the funding for Grand Junction construction and Windsor/Alamosa land purchase we are close to meeting the requirement to provide readiness centers for the new infantry battalion. Capital Construction funding to cover the state share of the Windsor/Alamosa construction in the coming year is critical to achieving this goal.

### Division of Veterans Affairs

The state's veterans' population is declining. (This is a result of the passing of the large numbers of WW II veterans). However, the remaining veterans are aging and experiencing more health care problems. Those with access to federal veterans' health care will place increasing demands on the system. Many of those that have not qualified for health care will seek access by trying to establish a service connection for the health issue. These cases are very difficult and time consuming to establish and it will add greatly to the workload of the Department's network of county and state veterans service officers. Increasingly, the Division is called upon for "outreach" programs for new veterans returning from overseas. The five certified service officers often have difficulty meeting these new and growing demands. We will monitor closely the impact of budget reductions on the operation and backlog within the Division.

### Division of Civil Air Patrol

The State Division of Civil Air Patrol has been operating at minimum staffing since one of the two FTE positions initially provided by the state was cut in 2003. The one-person office administers and tracks State funds and property, and serves as a division liaison to various municipal, county and state agencies for Civil Air Patrol support to those agencies. The ongoing funding of this division is critical in sustaining the required level of training of members and maintenance of vehicles and aircraft.

## **7. Department Objectives:**

### **Respond to State Emergencies and Search and Rescue Operations:**

- Provide a 24-hour, year-round rapid response capability for State emergencies
- Provide rapid response from both Civil Air Patrol and Army National Guard in search and rescue operations.

### **Maintain Infrastructure Support for the Army and Air National Guard:**

- Acquire or construct the required training and support facilities to DOD and State Standards.
- Maintain all facilities to DoD and State standards.

### **Provide responsive service to veterans and County Veterans Service Officers statewide:**

- Maintain a dignified and well maintained Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado.
- Decrease Division of Veterans Affairs processing time for veterans claims.
- Increase County Veterans Service Officer Certification and outreach.
- Maximize the federal funding for veterans in Colorado.

### **Establish and maintain efficient responsive administrative services in support of Department Programs:**

- Provide a budget analysis and review capability, to identify efficiencies, prioritize resources, and recommend budget priorities

- Provide efficient and effective purchasing/contracting support to all customers by continuously improving processes and complying with State rules
- Provide a reliable and interconnected computer network to all staff within divisions.
- Possess an efficient and effective Personnel section that hires, retains and provides service to the most qualified individuals available while adhering to State and federal human resource laws.
- Provide efficient and accurate accounting for and payment of bills to include prompt/accurate reports to all agencies.

### 8. Department-wide Performance Measures and Benchmarks

The Divisions of the Department have many parameters that can be and are measured. The selected Department level measures are the most comprehensive and wide ranging measures related to one or more Divisions.

<b>Performance Measure #1</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>FY 2008-09 Actual</b>	<b>FY 09-10 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2010-11 Appropriation</b>	<b>FY 2011-12 Request</b>
<b>Deploy initial National Guard forces and equipment within 4 hours of declaration of state emergency</b>	Benchmark	<4 hrs	<4 hrs	<4 hrs	<4 hrs
	Actual	<6 hrs	<6 hrs	<6 hrs	Unknown

The total time starts with the notification of the National Guard Emergency Operations Center by the State's Multi-Agency Coordination Center (MACC) that an authorization for Guard assistance has been received from the Governor's Office.

<b>Performance Measure #2</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>FY 2008-09 Actual</b>	<b>FY 09-10 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2010-11 Appropriation</b>	<b>FY 2011-12 Request</b>
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<b>Provide sufficient number of trained and equipped National Guard forces for state and federal emergencies.</b>	Benchmark	5114	5209	5209	5209
	Actual	5036	5357	5552	Unknown

The Benchmark is the number of positions authorized for Army and Air Guard members. The Actual is the number of Army and Air Guard members in the available positions. The Army Guard is authorized to go 10% above authorized positions so the Actual number could be higher than the Benchmark. State appropriated funds impact this performance measure in that construction and maintenance of Armories has an impact on the conditions under which the members train. This has an impact on recruiting and retention of members. Availability and funding levels for State Tuition Assistance is also an important contributor to both recruiting and retention.

<b>Performance Measure #3</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>FY 2008-09 Actual</b>	<b>FY 09-10 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2010-11 Appropriation</b>	<b>FY 2011-12 Request</b>
<b>Provide search and rescue aircraft response, Army Guard and Civil Air Patrol (CAP) within 90 minutes – weather permitting</b>		<90 mins	<90 mins	<90 mins	<90 mins
	Actual	140 mins	120 mins	120 mins	Unknown

Search and rescue missions reach the Department through two channels. 1) The County Sheriff can request search and rescue support through the State Division of Emergency Management (this is usually for Army National Guard helicopter support). 2) County Sheriffs can call the Air Force Rescue Coordination Center (AFRCC) which authorizes federally funded search and rescue missions for the Civil Air Patrol or National Guard. The time is measured from notification of the Army National Guard or CAP asset until launch of the Helicopter or Aircraft.

<b>Performance Measure #4</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>FY 2008-09 Actual</b>	<b>FY 09-10 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2010-11 Appropriation</b>	<b>FY 2011-12 Request</b>
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<b>Enable Veterans to receive the benefits to which they are entitled from the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs (\$/Veteran/year)</b>	Benchmark	\$1600	\$1780	\$1960	\$1960
	Actual	\$1558	\$1727	\$1890	Unknown

This performance measure is a composite of all the possible parameters that could be measured for service to veterans. It measures a combination of the number of veterans that the County Veteran Service Officers and the State Veteran Service Officers help get into the system and the amount of benefit (based on transfer payments to Colorado veterans) that the same Officers help those veterans obtain. The data is published by the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs on their web site and is available approximately 6 – 9 months after the end of the federal fiscal year.

<b>Performance Measure #5</b>	<b>Outcome</b>	<b>FY 2008-09 Actual</b>	<b>FY 09-10 Actual</b>	<b>FY 2010-11 Appropriation</b>	<b>FY 2011-12 Request</b>
<b>Achieve a Satisfactory (Category II) rating for each National Guard facility as measured by the Installation Status Report</b>	Benchmark	100%	100%	100%	100%
	Actual	67%	67%	67%	Unknown

All State Armories are reflected on the federal Installation Status Report. The Armories are rated based on age, condition and authorized square footage. There are three possible categories – I, II & III. Category I meet or exceed the standard. Category I do not meet the standard but are Satisfactory for use by National Guard Units.

Category III is Marginally Satisfactory or Unsatisfactory for use by National Guard Units due to their age, condition or health and safety problems

## **9. Strategies**

Performance Measure #1, deploy National Guard resources within four hours and Performance Measure #2, provide sufficient number of trained and equipped forces go to the heart of the State missions/expectations for the Division of National Guard. The Department's ability to meet those benchmarks is a function of many variables such as manpower authorizations, full-time manning, individual and

unit level training, condition of training facilities, equipment on hand, location of units, number of units deployed (or the converse - number of units available) and recruiting. Many of these variables are outside the Department's direct control, but others, particularly location and condition of facilities, recruiting and retention are directly impacted by the Department's budget programs.

In 2003, the Department was forced to dispose of several armories to meet budget constraints. This reduced Guard presence in several communities (Monte Vista, Trinidad, Craig, Greeley and Lamar). That in turn increased response time and the number of available forces. The budget constraints also limited the Department's readiness center maintenance to almost the level of "emergency only". This resulted in long lists of deferred maintenance. Working with the governor's office and the General Assembly, we have worked a successful strategy that sought to "buy back" the maintenance backlog. In addition, due in part to the success of the National Guard recruiting and retention, the Army national Guard maintained manpower strength that resulted in a new infantry battalion with over 800 personnel to be stationed in several new locations. The infantry battalion is part of a "grow the force" initiative that includes prioritized federal funding for 75% of the cost of construction for new readiness centers. Of course, the State must provide the other 25% as well as the land and infrastructure. This provides an opportunity to expand the Department's presence throughout the State (Alamosa, Ft. Lupton, Windsor, and Grand Junction) thus providing more ready forces and decreased response time (about 21 additional full-time personnel). This opportunity, however, is dependent on meeting several challenges, not the least of which is the State and federal budget cycles. Federal Construction dollars are part of a five year defense spending plan that may make federal dollars available in a year when the State's capital budget is severely constrained- -and the Department can potentially lose the project.

One of the additional challenges generated by the cooperative effort by the State and federal government in building and maintaining readiness centers is management. Federal employees, federally reimbursed State employees, and State funded employees work side by side to manage maintenance and construction. Federal employees have little experience with State rules and procedures on personnel, contracting, procurement and purchasing- -and they change positions on the average of every 3 years. The Department suffers from a lack of continuity in these important multi-year programs (capital construction, controlled maintenance and routine maintenance).

The State sponsored Tuition Assistance Program for members of the National Guard has been an important recruiting and retention tool as many of the service members seek to complete or further their education. Members have signed up for higher education in record numbers (an increase of 48% in the past five years). The growth in authorized manpower, (about 100 personnel in the Air Guard and 800 in the Army Guard) has further increased demand for tuition assistance.

Performance Measure #3, provide search and rescue aircraft response, is a function of many variables, such as aircraft authorized, maintenance status, location of aircraft, number and training status of pilots and crews. The Colorado Army National Guard operates the High Altitude Army Aviation Training Site (HAATS) in Gypsum, CO. This is a unique facility that provides world-class training to active duty and reserve/national guard rotary-wing aviators. This asset is a vital part of the search and rescue capability the Department provides. We also have 7 hoists for the UH-60s which are often vital for mountain rescues.

The Civil Air Patrol fleet of 14 Cessnas and 1 Gippsland GA-8 has presented some challenges. First, the Wing has been given four new “glass cockpit” aircraft that have state of the art instrumentation but require 10 hours of familiarity training and greater frequency of proficiency flights. Continued State funding provides increased flexibility to subsidize proficiency flying in the now-more-complex Colorado Wing Aircraft fleet. Volunteers already buy their own uniforms and pay to participate in most activities. By subsidizing some proficiency flying, the State is assisting the Colorado Wing in maintaining a high level of professionalism and proficiency, enabling the Civil Air Patrol to respond rapidly and perform superbly in its life-saving missions. Most aircraft and vehicle maintenance is funded through Civil Air Patrol’s National organization, however, much of the glider maintenance is not funded. Minor aircraft and vehicle maintenance is also not covered. State funding ensures all assets are kept mission-ready at all times, even when Civil Air Patrol is unable to budget for all needed repairs.

Performance Measure #4, enable veterans to receive the benefits to which they are entitled is a real challenge. Key elements of the equation are beyond the Department’s control- -the number of eligible veterans, the number who submit a claim, and the decision on each claim (the US Department of Veterans Affairs--not the State--makes the decision). The Board of Veterans Affairs conducted a survey of veterans and discovered that as many as 25% of the veterans in Colorado had never submitted a claim or even contacted the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This means that they are not counted by the Department in the decisions they make regarding locations of facilities. The Department’s benchmark, the dollars generated by each veteran (as a result of successful claims) could be improved if the Department were to contact and register more veterans. To the extent the Department can encourage counties to increase outreach to their “non-registered” veterans, the Department will increase the accuracy of the veterans’ demographics and gain more federal resources. The Department hopes to continue its pilot program to give counties the incentive to do this outreach through their County Veteran Service Officers.

## **10. Evaluation of Success in Meeting Benchmarks**

Performance Measure #1 Benchmark - Deploy initial National Guard forces and equipment within 4 hours actually was not extensively tested this year (a good thing).

Performance Measure #2 Benchmark – Provide 5209 trained and equipped National Guard forces was met because the Army National Guard actually exceeded its recruiting and retention goal.

Performance Measure #3 Benchmark –To improve performance/ time to less than 90 minutes would probably require crews on standby which is something the Department cannot afford. With crews on call, and available aircraft, the Department can probably continue to approach the 90 minute benchmark (weather permitting).

Performance Measure #4 Benchmark – Enable veterans to receive the benefits to which they are entitled is misleading. The Department established the dollar per veteran measure last year. The numbers came from the US Department of Veterans Affairs and are available 6-9 months after the end of the federal fiscal year.

Performance Measure #5 Benchmark – To achieve a satisfactory rating for each National Guard facility did not change. If the Department is successful with Capital Construction and Controlled Maintenance funding requests, we should show improvement in this benchmark.