

**Schedule 13**  
**Funding Request for the 2014-15 Budget Cycle**

Department: Department of Military and Veterans Affairs  
 Request Title: Veterans Memorial Cemetery Growth  
 Priority Number: R-1

Dept. Approval by: *H. Michael Slomko* 23 OCT 2013  
 Date

Decision Item FY 2014-15  
 Base Reduction Item FY 2014-15  
 Supplemental FY 2013-14  
 Budget Amendment FY 2014-15

OSPBA Approval by: *Paul M. ...* 10/25/13  
 Date

Line Item Information		FY 2013-14		FY 2014-15		FY 2015-16
		1	2	3	4	5
Fund		Appropriation FY 2013-14	Supplemental Request FY 2013-14	Base Request FY 2014-15	Funding Change Request FY 2014-15	Continuation Amount FY 2015-16
<b>Total of All Line Items</b>	<b>Total</b>	1,756,828		1,966,494	45,547	45,082
	FTE	4.5		4.5	0.9	1.0
	GF	532,716		614,854	45,547	45,082
	GFE					
	CF	249,084		257,407		
	RF					
	FF	975,028		1,094,233		
<b>(1) Executive Directors Office and Army National Guard, Health, Life, and Dental</b>	<b>Total</b>	765,826	-	867,179	4,421	4,421
	FTE	-	-	-	-	-
	GF	224,839	-	255,858	4,421	4,421
	GFE	-	-	-	-	-
	CF	15,836	-	16,066	-	-
	RF	-	-	-	-	-
	FF	525,151	-	595,255	-	-
<b>(1) Executive Directors Office and Army National Guard, Short Term Disability</b>	<b>Total</b>	13,270	-	15,921	53	58
	FTE	-	-	-	53	58
	GF	4,547	-	5,752	-	-
	GFE	-	-	-	53	58
	CF	140	-	231	-	-
	RF	-	-	-	-	-
	FF	8,583	-	9,938	-	-
<b>(1) Executive Directors Office and Army National Guard, Amortization Equalization Disbursement</b>	<b>Total</b>	262,764	-	306,787	1,187	1,451
	FTE	-	-	-	-	-
	GF	89,488	-	110,292	1,187	1,451
	GFE	-	-	-	-	-
	CF	2,792	-	4,423	-	-
	RF	-	-	-	-	-
	FF	170,484	-	192,072	-	-
<b>(1) Executive Directors Office and Army National Guard, Supplemental Amortization Equalization Disbursement</b>	<b>Total</b>	236,934	-	287,613	1,113	1,401
	FTE	-	-	-	-	-
	GF	80,504	-	103,399	1,113	1,401
	GFE	-	-	-	-	-
	CF	2,520	-	4,146	-	-
	RF	-	-	-	-	-
	FF	153,910	-	180,068	-	-
<b>(2) Division of Veterans Affairs, Western Slope Veterans Cemetery</b>	<b>Total</b>	478,034	-	488,994	38,773	37,751
	FTE	4.5	-	4.5	0.9	1.0
	GF	133,338	-	139,553	38,773	37,751
	GFE	-	-	-	-	-
	CF	227,796	-	232,541	-	-
	RF	-	-	-	-	-
	FF	116,900	-	116,900	-	-

Letternote Text Revision Required? Yes:  No:  If yes, describe the Letternote Text Revision:

Cash or Federal Fund Name and COFRS Fund Number:

Reappropriated Funds Source, by Department and Line Item Name:

Approval by OIT? Yes:  No:  Not Required:

Schedule 13s from Affected Departments:

Other Information:





# COLORADO

Department of Military and  
Veterans Affairs

Priority: R-1  
Veterans Memorial Cemetery Growth  
FY 2014-15 Change Request

## *Cost and FTE*

- The Department requests \$45,547 General Fund and 0.9 FTE for FY 2014-15 to provide grounds keeping and overall facility maintenance and repair for the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Grand Junction. The request annualizes in FY 2015-16 to \$45,082 General Fund and 1.0 FTE in FY 2015-16. This represents a 0.9% increase in FTE and an 18.2% increase in the Personal Services General Fund budget for the cemetery, and a 1.3% increase to the Department.

## *Current Program*

- The Veteran's Memorial Cemetery program provides grounds keeping operations and maintenance for the cemetery, which provides for interment for Colorado's veterans, their spouses and dependents. In FY 2013-14, the Program was appropriated \$478,034 total funding and 4.5 FTE.
- The workload is measured by the number of total interments, monthly interments, total acreage for maintenance, stream bed maintenance, grave opening and closing, irrigation system repairs, etc. Currently, the interment rate is .9 per day or 4.8 per week.

## *Problem or Opportunity*

- Previously the cemetery has utilized seasonal employee(s) during the growing season; however, with 12 years of growth and winter snow and ice removal, support is required year round to ensure cemetery requirements are met.
- To date, the cemetery has interred over 2,627 veterans and family members, utilized 6 of 7 columbaria and there are over 1,723 upright headstones that require maintenance and movement.

## *Consequences of Problem*

- With the continued growth in interments each year (250) and the cemetery's 16 acres of maturing grounds, the existing staff will be unable to maintain grounds at an optimal level, resulting in service degradation and safety issues.
- Inadequate support will degrade the cemetery's appearance and utilization of the site; this will negatively impact federally reimbursed interment costs and donations that provide key cash funding for this activity.

## *Proposed Solution*

- The Department will hire 0.9 FTE beginning in FY 2014-15 to support the growth in interments by providing grounds keeping, snow and ice removal, grave support, and maintenance of equipment and systems. This will allow the cemetery to maintain service to Colorado's veterans and families, appearance standards, and utilization of the cemetery.



*FY 2014-2015 CHANGE REQUEST*  
*Priority: R - 1 Veterans Memorial Cemetery Growth*  
*Request Detail*

***Problem or Opportunity:***

The Department of Military and Veterans Affairs serves Colorado's approximately 420,000 veterans. Veterans are adequately served along the Front Range by the two existing federally owned and operated veterans cemeteries. An additional federal veterans cemetery is pending construction in the nation's fifth largest military retiree community, El Paso County.

The Department strives to serve all of Colorado's veterans and focuses on outreach to rural veterans who are underserved by federal capabilities. One key effort of the Department is to provide a world-class veterans cemetery on the Western Slope that matches the benefit available to Front Range veterans. This is consistent with the Division of Veterans Affairs performance goal number two, namely to increase the number of veterans served.

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Grand Junction provides this unique service to Western Slope veterans, as well as their spouses and dependents, and measures this service in the number of interments completed in a year. Service delivery is a function of the aesthetic, functional quality of the facility and the professional manner in which interments are handled by the staff. Just recently, the Veterans Memorial Cemetery was selected as a 2012 winner of the Federal Veterans Administration's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program Excellence in Appearance Award. This prestigious award is indicative of the standard that has long been maintained in Grand Junction with limited resources.

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado opened in the fall of 2002. At that time there were 2.0 FTE authorized for the administration and management of the cemetery. There were no employees to take care of burial operations, landscaping maintenance, and all the other responsibilities of maintaining the cemetery. Initially, these services were handled by the Colorado Department of Human Services. This arrangement was in place for one year and it became apparent to Department staff that there was a need to hire additional personnel to handle burial operations and grounds keeping functions. Initially, the Department was able to hire 1.0 FTE. However, one FTE was not enough to accomplish burial operations and other tasks safely, and the cemetery needed an additional staff member to handle operations. Until the second staff member was hired, the administration and management staff would take turns assisting the single grounds keeper, primarily with burial operations.

In 2006, a second position was authorized by the passage of H.B. 06-1385 for maintenance and operations at the cemetery. Since that time, cemetery growth has necessitated the hiring of two seasonal employees to supplement the burial operations and grounds keeping workforce during the growing season (April through October). One seasonal position begins on or about April 1<sup>st</sup> and works until September 30<sup>th</sup>, and the other starts on May 1<sup>st</sup> and works until October 31<sup>st</sup>. The main function of these seasonal employees is grounds keeping while also assisting with burial operations as needed. This arrangement has allowed the Program to successfully manage, administer, operate and maintain the cemetery for the past several years. As the

cemetery has matured and maintenance has become much more demanding, the level of effort and attention required is ever increasing. The number of interments (2,639 total) along with the associated tasks required, maturation of landscaping features, the age and condition of systems and equipment has all combined to create a shortage of attention and resources, which is especially evident during the winter months (November through March). During the winter months when the maintenance staff takes vacations or uses sick time, there is only one grounds person to handle burial operations. Currently, the Department is utilizing its Administrative Assistant to help out in the field when this situation occurs.

As of October 2013, the cemetery has approximately 1,000 upright headstones that must be maintained along with seven columbaria, 16 acres of grounds and associated landscaping (trees, shrubs, and various other plantings have developed to the point where they must be pruned, fertilized and maintained), and four buildings representing 5,000 square feet. Vehicles and equipment, with the exception of a new Bobcat, are 10 to 12 years old, and the extensive irrigation system requires more repair and maintenance with each year. The cemetery's irrigation system is anchored on a pond/stream water feature that meanders through the cemetery. Two to three times per season the cattails must be removed from this water feature, which is a daunting and time consuming task. Attachment 1 provides an aerial view of the Veterans Memorial Cemetery, and shows the location and size of grounds, facilities, and irrigation ponds.

In addition to burial operations and grounds keeping duties, the cemetery staff is currently replacing a concrete slab in the walkway adjacent to the north side of the stream bed, between Columbaria 2 and 3. This is a necessary, but significant endeavor that involves removing the slab, removing roots underneath from a nearby tree which caused the slab to rise (tripping hazard), and ultimately re-pouring the slab. As the cemetery ages, projects such as this become more frequent and require immediate attention before they becomes life/safety concerns, and the completion of other maintenance-related tasks is delayed as a result.

Essentially, much more work is done at the cemetery besides burial operations and grounds keeping maintenance. The maintenance staff handles many different types of activities ensuring the cemetery always operates in an effective and efficient manner.

The increase in interments over time necessitates increases in maintenance. Additional maintenance is further necessitated by the facilities' age and the impact on certain systems (pumps, irrigation, lighting, etc.). That staff is currently inadequate to handle these increased workload requirements. Burial rates over the last several years demonstrate a steady increase in burials which will further this trend. These burial rates include veterans, spouses, and children. The table below represents the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2002 only. (See the table below and Attachment 4).

<b>Burials</b>	
2012	269
2011	240
2010	254
2009	239
2008	265
2007	210
2006	224
2005	191
2004	213
2003	202
2002	138

Since interments average one per day, the workload of maintenance must necessarily be balanced by the requirement to provide support to vault opening, actual burial services, subsequent vault closure, sod rehabilitation, etc.

It takes two employees approximately 3.5 to 4.0 hours minimum to support a burial service. This time will increase as increased headstone counts require multiple headstones to be removed and replaced to access certain vaults due to federally specified row spacing.

***Proposed Solution:***

The Department is requesting \$45,547 GF and 0.9 FTE for maintenance, grounds keeping and support to the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Grand Junction, Colorado. With the necessary funding, the Department will be able to hire a permanent employee that will enhance the professional maintenance team, which understands and maintains the solemn dignity of the cemetery.

The additional staff member will enhance the Program's ability to provide for safe burial operations. Safe operations require two individuals be available during the opening and closing of graves. Currently, if one staff member is gone and there is no temporary support available, then the Administrative Assistant must leave the office and assist. This at times leaves the office unattended and visitors must either wait or come back at a later time. This is not consistent with the high level of service provided at the cemetery.

Furthermore, the additional FTE will provide additional support to the Department's grounds keeping operations which continue to increase year after year as the cemetery continues to mature. Besides mowing, grounds keeping operations include the collection of all paper, trash, branches, flowers that are not associated with a grave, and any other debris that must be collected prior to mowing. In addition, proper mowing height must be checked prior to utilizing any equipment to ensure grass is mowed to certain heights depending on the season and type of grass. For example, during periods of excessive rain or heat, mower height is critical in ensuring the grounds are aesthetically pleasing. Furthermore, mower blades must be checked for sharpness to provide a quality cut and prevent the tearing of grass blades. Edging and trimming is another concern. The grass that is adjacent to fixed objects such as columbaria, grave stones,

monuments, concrete pathways must be trimmed to the same height as the grass. Trimming and edging are also done around all of the tree rings and plant beds, sidewalks and pathways, and other areas that are bordered by grass. The turf around sprinkler heads must be trimmed or treated with an herbicide to prevent interference and ensure proper water output.

Fertilization is another task that is required throughout the grounds. Depending on the location, fertilizer must be swept off of walks and drives onto the lawn or beds. In addition, any fertilizer that would come into contact with monuments, markers, and stones must be swept off or removed in some manner to prevent damage to the stone from chemicals. Trees, shrubs, and ground cover require fertilization as well. For example, trees and shrubs should be fertilized four to six weeks after planting and two to three times per year for the following three years.

Pruning, weeding, aeration and pest control are completed on an as-needed basis. Pruning is normally done to remove dead or diseased branches, reduce foliage density, or improve the beauty of the plant. Weeding must be completed manually in the landscape beds, mulched areas, around plots, sidewalks, and parking lots. Regular aeration must be accomplished in the spring or before the soil freezes in late fall. Prior to aeration, all sprinkler heads must be marked. Pest issues or problems are dealt with immediately upon confirmation of a problem. Cemetery personnel apply pesticides in any and all areas where confirmation of problems are identified.

In the spring and fall, all grass and bed areas are cleaned of leaves, weeds, trash, and all other debris remaining. The replacement, planting, and relocating of rose bushes, trees, shrubs, etc. is an ongoing process throughout the year, with the exception of the winter season.

Irrigation system work is required throughout the growing season as well. For example, upon turn-on in the spring, all zones and sprinkler heads and lines must be tested for proper operation, and zones must be re-set for specific times according to the time of season. Minor adjustments and repairs are made on sprinkler heads, leaks addressed, and overall line maintenance performed regularly. Weekly assessment is completed to determine if there are inadequate or excessive irrigation issues and drainage problems. Repairs are done in-house and require additional time and resources.

The winter months require specific cemetery maintenance. Opening and closing graves require additional time as the ground is cold, frozen, and slick. At times, snow must be removed from the area where the grave site will be. In addition, snow and ice must be removed from roadways and parking lots for the safe movement of vehicles. Walkways and the Committal Shelter must be free of snow and ice to ensure the safety of visitors, funeral attendees and employees. In addition, roses require mulching and perennial beds must be maintained. The roses are cut back to help reduce plant damage. Decorative pots and containers are emptied and stored inside during the winter. Fallen leaves and limbs along with other debris are removed from the lawn to prevent any turf damage. During heavy snowfall, limbs of trees and shrubs are shaken and pruned as necessary to prevent damage. Trees and shrubs are also inspected for signs of damage from rabbits and other wildlife. Watering of newly planted trees and shrubs is done throughout the winter months.



Again, this priority is linked to Department's performance goal two and will allow for a greater capacity for year-round service while limiting the necessity of hiring seasonal, temporary employees. The alternative to hiring 0.9 additional FTE is to attempt to contract additional services. This alternative solution is not economically prudent (see chart):

<b>Groundskeeper Costs</b>		
Position/Employer	Monthly Rate	Δ from State
State Grounds and Nursery II	\$2,748	N/A
Private Groundskeeper/Maint. *	\$3,373	\$625
Colo. Mesa Univ. Groundskeeper	\$4,299	\$1,551

\* information provided by the Mesa County Work Force Center

The additional 0.9 FTE will benefit the veteran and their family members by allowing for increases to both aesthetic upkeep as well as the mitigation of safety concerns.

The Department submitted a FY 2014-15 capital request for the one-time replacement of aging equipment and expansion of the columbaria at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery. This expansion will provide for estimated capability into FY 2024-25. Please see Attachment 2 for the Department's expansion plan.

***Anticipated Outcomes:***

This solution will allow for a permanent member of the cemetery's staff to become inculcated in the culture and ethos of the cemetery and provide respectful and professional service. The Veterans Memorial Cemetery is winner of the Federal Veterans Administration's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program Excellence in Appearance Award for 2012. This prestigious award is indicative of the standard that has long been maintained in Grand Junction with limited resources. The maintenance staff's dedication to excellence, pride and professionalism in everything they do is evident and has been recognized by the winning of this prestigious award. The requested 0.9 FTE will allow the Department to continue operations at this level as cycle of growth continues.

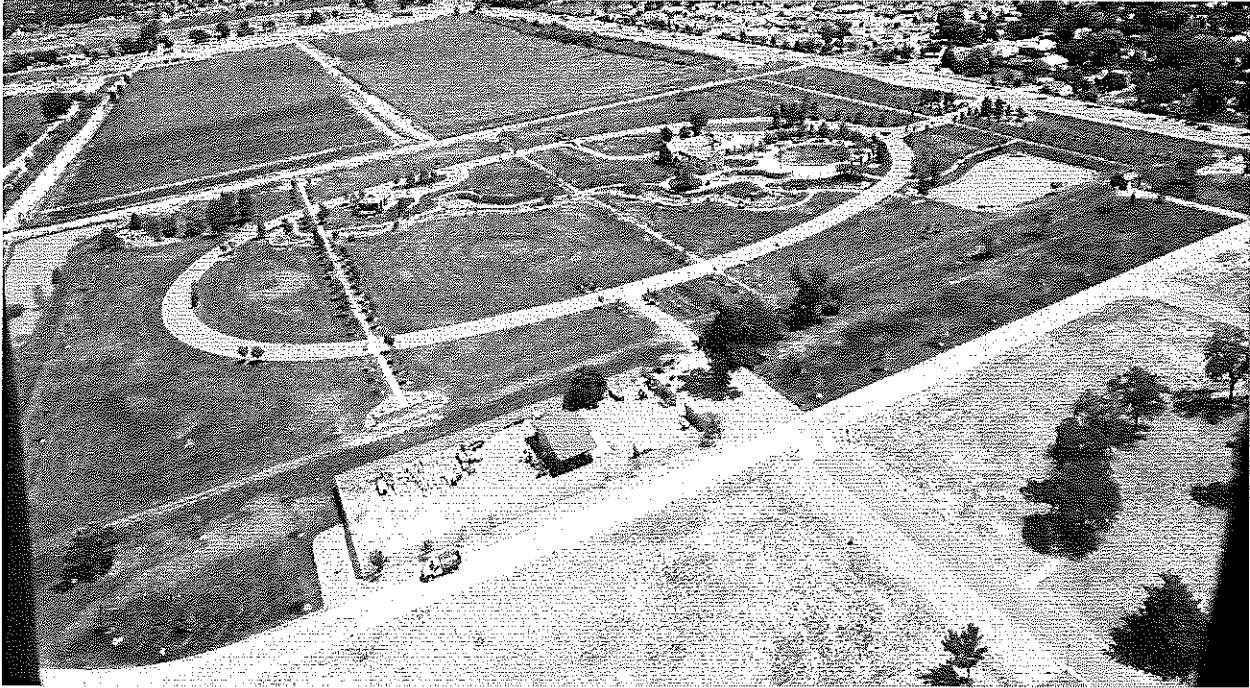
It is anticipated that this position will provide daily support to all non-administrative cemetery operating functions to include care of the lawn, grave sites, trees and shrubbery, roads and walkways, equipment, etc. This FTE will assist with burial operations (vault opening and closing, headstone movement and placement, etc.). Irrigation system management and maintenance and repair of mowers, tractors and other implements will be an additional critical skill that this FTE will bring to the cemetery.

Overall success will be measured by a continued high rate of utilization of the cemetery along with positive customer feedback. Continued achievement of national awards can also be factored into these metrics as appropriate.

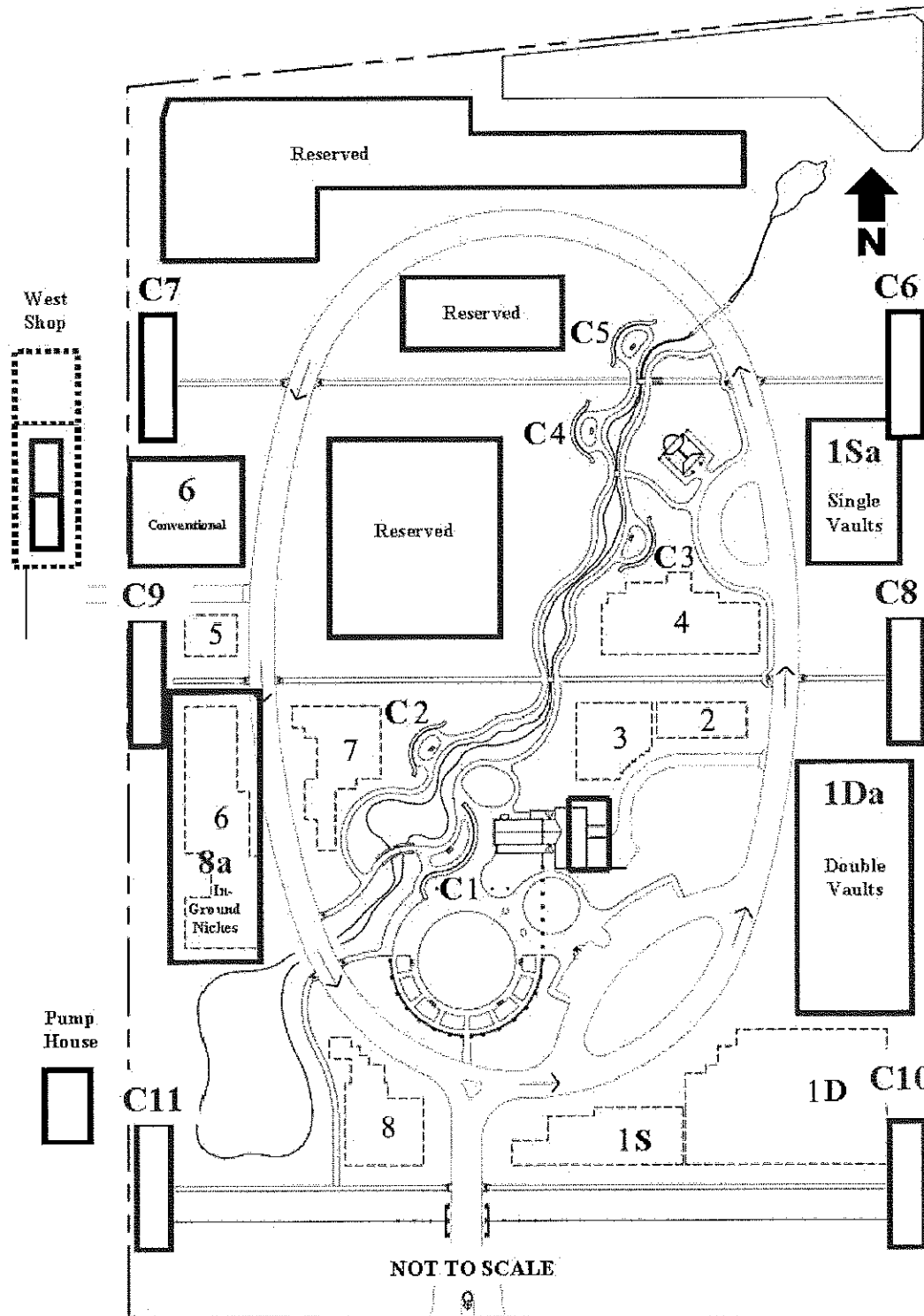
***Assumptions and Calculations:***

The monthly salary rate for the position is based on the minimum salary for the Grounds and Nursery II classification which is \$2,748, or \$32,976 annually. The total annual cost for 0.9 FTE which includes benefits and operating is \$45,547 in FY 2014-15, and the request will annualize to 1.0 FTE and \$44,632 in FY 2015-16. Please see Attachment 3 for detailed calculations.

**Attachment 1: Aerial View of Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Western Colorado**



# Attachment 2: Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado



Existing Interment Areas in Black: 1S - Single Vaults (30' W x 86' L x 25' D); 1D - Double Vaults (30' W x 86' L x 54' D); 2, 3 & 4 - Memorial Garden Plots; 5, 6 & 7 - Conventional Gravesites (6' W x 10' L); 8 - In-Ground Niches (3' W x 3' L).  
 Proposed Build-Out Areas in Red

### Attachment 3: FTE Calculations

#### Calculations

**Operating Expenses** -- Base operating expenses are included per FTE for \$500 per year. In addition, for regular FTE, annual telephone costs assume base charges of \$450 per year.

**Standard Capital Purchases** -- Each additional employee necessitates the purchase of a Personal Computer (\$900), Office Suite Software (\$330), and office furniture (\$3,473).

**General Fund FTE** -- New full-time General Fund positions are reflected in FY 2014-15 as 0.9166 FTE to account for the pay-date shift.

Expenditure Detail		FY 2014-15		FY 2015-16	
<b>Personal Services:</b>		FTE	\$	FTE	
	Monthly Salary				
Grounds and Nursery II	\$ 2,748	0.9	29,678	1.0	32,976
PERA			3,012		3,347
AED			1,187		1,451
SAED			1,113		1,401
Medicare			430		478
STD			53		58
Health-Life-Dental			4,421		4,421
<b>Subtotal Position 1, 1.0 FTE</b>		<b>0.9</b>	<b>\$ 39,894</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>\$ 44,132</b>
<b>Subtotal Personal Services</b>		<b>0.9</b>	<b>\$ 39,894</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>\$ 44,132</b>
<b>Operating Expenses</b>					
Regular FTE Operating Expenses	500	1.0	500	1.0	500
Telephone Expenses	450	1.0	450	1.0	450
PC, One-Time	1,230	1.0	1,230	1.0	-
Office Furniture, One-Time	3,473	1.0	3,473	1.0	-
Other			-		-
<b>Subtotal Operating Expenses</b>			<b>\$ 5,653</b>		<b>\$ 950</b>
<b>TOTAL REQUEST</b>		<b>0.9</b>	<b>\$ 45,547</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>\$ 45,082</b>

#### Attachment 4: Burials per Calendar Year 2002-2013

Number of Burials	
CY02	138
CY03	202
CY04	213
CY05	191
CY06	224
CY07	210
CY08	265
CY09	239
CY10	254
CY11	240
CY12	269
CY13	273

