



**2014 Annual Report
of the
Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs**

STATE OF COLORADO

COLORADO BOARD OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Members

William "Robby" Robinson, Chair - Castle Pines
Dana Niemela, Vice Chair - Denver
Rene J. Simard - Secretary - Highlands Ranch
Kathleen Dunemn - Littleton
Chris M. Holden - Colorado Springs
Duane Dailey - Hot Sulphur Springs
Wendy Sue Chiado, PhD - Colorado Springs

Division of Veterans Affairs

1355 S. Colorado Blvd.
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Phone: 303-284-6077
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Reuben Mestas
Director

John Hickenlooper
Governor

Major General
H. Michael Edwards
The Adjutant General



December 16, 2014

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
Governor, State of Colorado
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Senator Jessie Ulibarri
State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee
Colorado Senate
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Representative Su Ryden
State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee
Colorado House of Representatives
200 East Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203

Subject: 2014 Annual Report of the Board of Veterans Affairs

In accordance with the Colorado Revised Statutes, I am pleased to provide you the 2014 Report of the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs (CBVA). This report covers the period of December 1, 2013 through December 1, 2014.

The CBVA is comprised of seven members, all honorably discharged veterans of military service who serve four-year terms on the Board. Duane Dailey and Wendy Chiado were appointed effective 1 July 2014 to replace retiring Board member Jay Bobick and resigning member Jason Crow respectively. Mr. Dailey is an Army veteran, a former county commissioner and is now the Grand County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO). Wendy Chiado is a former Navy officer and is from El Paso County. Board Chairman, William "Robby" Robinson, was nominated for a second term on the Board. All will require Senate confirmation during the 2015 General Assembly session. Other members of the Board are newly elected officers Vice Chairman, Dana Niemela, Secretary, Rene Simard, Kathleen Dunemn and Chris Holden. During the reporting period the Board met twelve times to address issues and to plan programs of service to Colorado Veterans. They also participated in numerous veterans' events such as veterans stand downs in Denver and Colorado Springs, the opening of the National Guard Armory in north Colorado Springs, the Aurora Veterans Salute, the Fruita Veterans Day Ceremony, and the graduation of a veterans pipefitters class.

The largest issue facing Colorado Veterans remains the slow processing of claims by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The wait time from claim submission to adjudication is nearly 8 months. If the veteran appeals the VA's decision, the wait time extends another 21 months. While marginally better than last year (8 months and 23 months respectively), this is still unacceptable. The

Board notes that the lengthy processing time is one that seems perpetual, and each new Secretary of the VA takes initiatives to solve the problem. Sometimes there is progress. Inevitably, the problem returns as the population of veterans continues to evolve both in numbers and in complexity of disability. These long processing times create problems for the State: we inherit the medical and financial challenges the veterans face while waiting for a decision from VA. It is clear that there is a systemic problem and one that the Board and Colorado cannot solve. We request you pressure VA to tackle the problem and encourage the new Secretary of the VA to implement a process that allows for the most expedited access to care possible for the veteran.

Rural veterans have identified access to primary and mental health care as a significant issue. The VA provides quality mental health services, particularly for combat-related issues; however, this care is provided mainly at major health care facilities like Denver and Grand Junction. Access to it becomes problematic for our rural veterans, and the VA has been reluctant to authorize local providers to provide care. We are working with the Eastern Colorado Healthcare System Director to increase the VA sensitivity to this problem and perhaps exercise greater authorization for local care. The Board will continue to monitor a new nationwide initiative called "Veterans Choice Card," authorizing eligible veterans who live more than 40 miles from a facility to seek treatment from local providers, in hopes that it may improve the access to care. In the coming year, the Board plans to focus more attention on identifying the unique needs of Colorado's rural veterans.

The claims process for a veteran most frequently begins with the County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO). In our report last year we noted that many counties do not fulfill this "state mandated" position, or do so minimally, and that the state monetary incentive to do it is meager (\$200 per month for a full time CVSO). We are very pleased that the Governor supports the Department's budget request this year to include funding the positions at \$8.00 per hour. We believe that this will greatly enhance the claims and benefits for Colorado veterans and provide an economic boost to counties where they reside by increasing VA dollars that come into the County through veterans' pensions or reduced demand on county services. In December, the Division of Veterans Affairs and Board members briefed county commissioners at the Colorado Counties Inc. meeting on the entire State Veterans Service Officer Program and gained CCI support for the Governor's budget initiative to raise their salaries to at least minimum wage.

Colorado has made great strides in dealing with the homeless veteran population and in providing long term solutions for veteran homelessness. Ft. Lyon Transitional Living Center is an important initiative that the Board supported. The Board visited the facility in June and was most impressed by the program for Veterans, the facility and its potential, as well as the residents and staff. It is evident that in many cases removal from a dysfunctional, non-supportive environment and the provision of a holistic solution will contribute significantly to the successful rehabilitation and reintegration of our homeless veterans. We salute your Ft. Lyon initiative and the hope it continues.

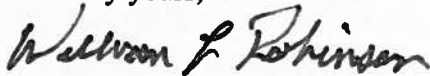
The Veterans Trust Fund and the Veterans Assistance Grant provide grant funds to help veterans organizations, government agencies and non-profits grant funds for veterans programs that are needed by the different communities throughout Colorado. Last Fiscal Year \$800,154 was provided through the Veterans Trust Fund to veterans service organizations to provide medical transportation assistance, emergency financial assistance and medical assistance. The Veterans Assistance Grant provided \$90,000, mostly for veterans' homeless prevention and treatment programs and mental health. While these funds have helped, it is worth noting that the requests for these emergency funds are more than triple the amount available, and there are many communities struggling to meet the needs. We note that we are very pleased that the Governor's Budget Request for FY 2015-2016 includes a continuation of

the \$1 million in the Veterans Assistance Grant. The breakdown of the grant funding provided is included in this report as Attachment 1 and Attachment 2.

The State Auditor conducted a performance review of the Veterans Trust Fund this year. There were five findings in the areas of public meeting notice, accounting, goals, priorities and outcome measurement as well as potential conflicts of interest. The Board and Department took immediate action to incorporate the auditor's recommendations and as of November, have addressed all their concerns. We believe that the Fund and its administration currently meet all requirements and expectations. The Legislative Audit Committee will hold an update hearing in January of 2015.

Colorado continues to grow in its service to veterans. Efforts made to connect veterans to VA care, community-based organizations and services through the Department, Division, and the administration of the Veterans Trust Fund and Veterans Assistance Grant, are unquestionably essential services. The commitment to funding the mandate for our County Service Officers, along with a renewed commitment by Colorado's County Commissioners, will only serve to improve outcomes for the veterans in our communities. Connecting veterans to Federal benefits, health care, housing and employment opportunities will reduce as well as prevent unemployment and homelessness and ultimately will strengthen all of our communities.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "William L. Robinson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "William" and last name "Robinson" clearly legible.

William L. Robinson, Chairman
Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs

Attach: Report of the Board of Veterans Affairs

2014 Report of the Board of Veterans Affairs

Veterans Trust Fund

The Veterans Trust Fund originates from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement and it disbursed \$800,154 in FY 2013-2014. Funds may be used for State Veterans Community Living Centers, Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado, the Division of Veterans Affairs and non-profit veterans' service organizations recognized by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as an organization that can provide services to veterans under Title 38, USC, such as the American Legion, Disabled American Veterans and Veterans of Foreign Wars. The grant funds are primarily used to provide veterans with emergency assistance, transportation for medical services and homeless prevention. Over eleven thousand veterans benefitted from grants awarded to non-profit veterans' service organizations during the fiscal year. The Veterans Trust Fund Annual Report for FY 2013-2014 is Attachment 1.

Veterans Assistance Grant

The State General Assembly, through appropriations, authorized the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) Veterans Assistance Grant to receive \$1,000,000 from the general fund for FY 2013-2014. Of these funds, a total of \$970,000 was designated to be granted to non-profit or governmental agencies to provide assistance to veterans in the State. The grant program received requests in the amount of \$3,804,471. A total of 18 non-profit organizations and governmental entities throughout the state were awarded grants. The direct services provided through the grants include the provision of shelter, housing and emergency assistance to homeless veterans, employment assistance, transportation, legal assistance, mental health services and other forms of assistance to veterans throughout the state.

- A total of \$913,435.24 was expended by the grantees.
- A total of 3,290 veterans were served during the contract period.
- The resulting cost per veteran is \$277.64, with a fund execution rate of 94%.

A full list of grant recipients, location and funding amount is Attachment 2.

On 5/26/2014, the governor signed House Bill 14-1205 creating the DMVA Veterans Assistance Grant Program in statute through the year 2024. The statute allows the continuation of grant funds to nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies that provide services to veterans. The Board of Veterans Affairs continues to provide consultation regarding funding decisions, rules and policies for this program. This significant step will ensure the continued support of vital services to veterans in Colorado.

Division of Veterans Affairs

The Division of Veterans Affairs (DVA), with their Veterans Service Officers (VSOs), serves as the State "hub" for the network of County Veteran Service Officers. They review claims received from the CVSOs and forward them to the US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) for processing. Importantly, the State VSOs are also certified to represent veterans on claim

appeals. They also provide initial direct claim service to many veterans from the Denver Metro area who walk in to the DVA offices. Importantly, the Division also provides annual training and certification to County Veterans Service Officers and service officers from other recognized veterans service organizations.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reported the Colorado Veteran population at 390,824, which was a decline from last year by 4,789. This reduction indicated the continued passing of our State's WW II veterans. With an aging population of Vietnam Veterans, the expenditures specifically for VA Healthcare will continue, as will the care for our youngest generation of Veterans from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

In 2014 Colorado veterans continued to make an impact on their local economies. Colorado saw an over-all benefits increase of \$400 million and reached the \$2.5 billion mark in total benefits, of which \$324 million went to our youngest veterans in the form of education and vocational rehabilitation benefits. The Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs team directly affected \$1.2 billion in direct pay outs to veterans in the form of compensation and pension benefits. The Division of Veterans Affairs team features 18 full time employees, which includes staff at our Veteran Memorial Cemetery in Grand Junction, grant administrators and State veteran service Officers.

The greatest challenge, in addition to the increased workload, is the slow processing times for claims and appeals with the USDVA. Initial claims take about 8 months for processing and an appeal takes nearly two years. These long processing times create hardships for the veterans and their communities as many seek financial and health care assistance from overloaded State and local service agencies while USDVA decisions are pending. The full report from the Division is attachment 3.

Veterans Service Officer Training

The 2014 Annual CVSO Training Conference was held 21-25 April 2014 at the Westminster Doubletree Hotel. The Division of Veterans Affairs staff provided training to new County Service Officers and provided continuing education credits needed for seasoned service officers. They employed a variety of teaching methods to cover a diverse list of topics in the week long training including but not limited to: pension, aid and attendance, education, service connected claims, appeals, notice of disagreement, ethics, health care, presumptive and secondary issues, increases, state programs, homelessness, women veterans, discharge upgrades, debt management, Reserve and Guard issues, and retirements. Sixty-eight county service officers, along with thirteen others from outside organizations to include Colorado State Veteran Community Living Centers, Rocky Mountain Human Services, and Volunteers of America attended this relevant training. Several experts from the Denver VA Regional Office shared their knowledge and used the time to build bridges of partnership to better serve our Veterans.

Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado

The Veterans Memorial Cemetery of Western Colorado was built using federal and State funds in 2002. The State, through the Division of Veterans Affairs, maintains and operates the cemetery and as of November of this year has interred 2992 veterans and their eligible dependents. Over the years the Board has provided funds from the Veterans Trust primarily to

add columbarium space and to conduct occasional emergency repairs. We are pleased that the FY 2015 budget includes \$4.6M for build out of the cemetery and replacement of worn equipment and the irrigation system. An additional FTE was added to assist with grounds maintenance since each year, more and more of the acreage is used, requiring detailed care. The Board strongly supports this timely action to preserve the Veterans Memorial Cemetery.

Legislative Issues and Actions

The Board supported the initiative from the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Governor's Office to authorize the annual Veterans Assistance Grant in statute rather than simply through an annual appropriation. We provided testimony to that effect and are pleased that the bill sponsored by Senator Crowder and Representative Ryden was passed and signed into law, thus requiring the legislature to consider funding for this important program each year. While the Board did not actively support other legislation, we would like to mention two other legislative actions important to veterans: the extension of the benefits of the Military and Family Relief Fund to members of the National Guard and Reserve who are called to state duty and the establishment of a suicide prevention commission that will include military representation. The property tax exemption for 100% permanently and totally disabled veterans was also expanded so that it remains in effect for surviving spouses when the veteran passes.

Department of Local Affairs: Disabled Veterans Property Tax Exemption

Permanently and totally disabled veterans may apply for a property tax exemption for the first \$200,000 of taxable value for their residence. They must apply through, and be approved by, the Division of Veterans Affairs for this exemption. There are 3,829 veterans who have been using this exemption. The exempted property tax amount is \$2,083,129. The State Auditor is presently conducting a performance audit of this program. The full report is Attachment 4.

Department of Labor and Employment

The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment delivers an array of labor and employment services to Colorado veterans through the 59 State and county run One Stop Workforce Centers and satellite offices. Services provided include job matching and referral, vocational and career guidance, labor market information, resume writing and job search workshops. Centers also refer eligible veterans to appropriate Workforce Investment Act training programs and referrals to skilled apprenticeship program. In FY 2013-14, over 42, veterans registered for employment assistance. (This was a decrease of about 5,000 veterans from the previous year.) Over 25,000 of these veterans used local workforce centers to receive staff assisted services. The Department employs 29 full-time Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists (DVOPS) and 7 full-time Local Veteran Employment Representatives. The DVOPS prioritize their work with disabled homeless, incarcerated and recently separated veterans. Over 3900 veterans received their intensive services, 20% of whom were recently separated from the service. The full report from the Department is Attachment 5.

Veterans in Higher Education

Over 90 participants joined in the Fourth Annual Veterans in Higher Education Summit this year, hosted jointly by the Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State University and the University of Colorado Denver. Panels focused on fundraising for student Veteran organizations,

programs, prior learning assessments and creating partnerships with Veteran service organizations. Moving forward, the Veterans in Higher Education Summit is moving under the auspices of CO-ACME - the Colorado Advisory Committee for Military Education.

Department of Revenue

There are 29 different military and veterans license plates authorized in statute. Many, such as the Medal of Honor Recipient, Purple Heart and Disabled Veteran plates are free and exempt from annual vehicle fees while others, such as the U.S. Army, Navy or Air Force plates cost \$50 and do not exempt the vehicle from fees. There are 128,591 vehicles registered with one of the military or veterans license plates.

The Department also provides several other services to members of the armed services. Deployed members may be exempt from motor vehicle registration fees and pay only \$1.00 in specific ownership tax. The VETS-2-TRUCKS program allows service member with 2 years of heavy truck operator experience to qualify for a Commercial Drivers License without taking the skills test. Veterans and active duty service members may also have a veteran or active military identifier placed on their State driver's license for free. The report from the Department is Attachment 6.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Parks and Wildlife offers several benefits to Colorado veterans. Veterans with a disabled veterans license plate are granted free admission to State parks. Any active or retired military member receiving treatment at a military facility or convalescing can be given a free fishing license. A Purple Heart recipient or disabled veteran may also obtain a free lifetime combination small game hunting and fishing license. Wounded warriors and active duty military who are stationed in Colorado or residents of Colorado are also offered a range of benefits and exceptions for big game hunting draw preferences. The complete report is Attachment 7.

Colorado Veterans Monument

C.R.S. 24-80-1401(2) requires that one member of the Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs be a member of the Preservation Trust Committee for the Colorado Veterans Monument. The monument is located at Veterans Park to the west of the Colorado State Capitol. Board member Rene Simard holds the membership position.

In 2014 the Capitol Complex Division planted trees in the garden leading from Broadway to the monument tower. The bush removal/sod replacement and bench concrete will occur in 2015 for the Veterans Day 2015 rededication. Mr. Tim Drago of the Preservation Trust Committee continues to ensure that the monument and grounds are well maintained and reflect Colorado's pride in those men and women who have served our great nation and the State of Colorado.

Attachments:

1. Veterans Trust Fund Report
2. Veterans Assistance Grant Report
3. Division of Veterans Affairs
4. Department of Local Affairs
5. Department of Labor and Employment

6. Department of Revenue
7. Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Attachment 1

1.1 DMVA - COLORADO STATE VETERAN'S TRUST FUND

Program Overview:

Program Representative:	Ray Z. Dissinger, 720-250-1521, ray.dissinger@dmva.state.co.us	
Program Description:	The program fund provides funds for: capital improvements or needed amenities for existing or future veterans community living centers; state veterans cemeteries; division costs, and; grant programs operated by nonprofit veterans organizations.	
Eligible Population:	Veterans within Colorado.	
Services:		Number of Eligible Persons Served:
Assist veterans through non-profit veterans' organizations, veterans' nursing homes and veterans' cemeteries. Examples of assistance include transportation assistance and funding for basic necessities for homeless and low-income veterans.		12,158 (Instances of Assistance)

Financial Overview:

Total Program Appropriation	\$3,293,178
MSA Appropriation	\$866,135
MSA Allocation	\$907,700
MSA Expenditure	\$800,154

FY 14-15 Strategic Priorities and Key Goals:

The program provides support to Veteran's across a number of different touch points and is working to develop specific program goals. Current goals include establishing community partnerships and assisting post-9/11 veterans and rural veterans. The program is also in the course of developing performance measures.

Partner Relationships: In development

Measures of Success:

FY 15-16. A description of the outputs and outcomes the program anticipates to collect and track are presented below.

Program Outputs	Program Outcomes
Some data points that may be tracked are number of grants awarded to grantees, number of veterans assisted and types of assistance.	The program would like to assess the degree to which veterans and veterans' well-being improved with program services.

Office of the State Auditor FY 2013-14 Performance Audit Key Facts and Findings (excerpt from the report)

- In the Fiscal Year 2013 grant cycle, there were 40 grant contracts, totaling almost \$900,000. The individual grant contract amounts ranged from \$2,000 to \$79,080.

- Grant application and awarding guidelines contain only broad language which do not specify clear goals and therefore do not provide a clear direction for using the limited funding to provide assistance where it is most needed.
- We could not determine whether the Board's process for making grant award and funding decisions for the Fiscal Year 2013 grant cycle was consistent and equitable to all applicants or whether it targeted funds to those applicants that could most effectively address the needs of veterans in Colorado.
- We identified 55 of the 900 expenditures in our sample that may not be appropriate to carry out the purpose of the grant project.
- We found that 140 of the 900 expenditures in our sample lacked a detailed and accurate description of the items or services provided, and that for 748 of the 900 expenditures in our sample the documentation provided by the grantees was insufficient to allow the Department to determine whether the payment was appropriate given the purpose of the grant.
- The statements of work in the Department's contracts with the grantees are not clear or comprehensive enough to describe specifically how grant funds are intended to be used by grantees.
- The Department and Board do not measure the number of veterans served, the types of services provided, or how the services helped improve conditions for veterans.
- We found that three previous Board members had voted on grant applications with which they had potential conflicts of interest.
- The Board has not consistently followed the requirements of Colorado's open meetings laws.

The full Veterans Trust Fund Grant Program, Performance Audit, May 2014, Department of Military and Veterans Affairs can be found on the OSA website or at

[http://www.leg.state.co.us/OSA/coauditor1.nsf/All/FEEBF833A81733D287257CD8007268AE/\\$FILE/1340P%20-%20Veterans%20Trust%20Fund%20Grant%20Program%20-%20June%202014%20rev.pdf](http://www.leg.state.co.us/OSA/coauditor1.nsf/All/FEEBF833A81733D287257CD8007268AE/$FILE/1340P%20-%20Veterans%20Trust%20Fund%20Grant%20Program%20-%20June%202014%20rev.pdf).

Program Challenges and Improvement Opportunities:

The program is implementing the following improvement in response to the OSA audit:

- Establish and communicate performance measures and goals, and outcome measures
- Determine if grantees should identify and set goals.
- Realize benchmarks by reviewing national averages on veteran well-being and other veteran service agencies' success measures and performance on such measures
- Establish a veteran satisfaction survey that each grantee can administer to the veteran pre- and post-service. Measures will seek to quantify the reasons for seeking support, and the actual improvement on a number of well-being factors
- Set-up training with potential grant applicants and grantees so that they understand the required outputs and outcomes.
- Identify and share best practices among grantees.

Attachment 2

Veterans Assistance Grant

2013-2014 Final Report

The State General Assembly, through appropriations, authorized the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) Veterans Assistance Grant to receive \$1,000,000 from the general fund for FY 2013-2014. Of these funds, a total of \$970,000 was designated to be granted to non-profit or governmental agencies to provide assistance to veterans in the State. The following is a final report of the administration of those monies.

The grant program received requests in the amount of \$3,804,471.54. A total of 18 non-profit organizations and governmental entities throughout the state were awarded grants. The direct services provided through the grants include the provision of shelter, housing and emergency assistance to homeless veterans, employment assistance, transportation, legal assistance, mental health services and other forms of assistance to veterans throughout the state.

- A total of \$913,435.24 was expended by the grantees.
- A total of 3,290 veterans were served during the contract period.
- The resulting cost per veteran is \$277.64, with a fund execution rate of 94%.

(A full list of grant recipients, location and funding amount is attached.)

On 5/26/2014, the governor signed House Bill 14-1205 creating the DMVA Veterans Assistance Grant Program in statute through the year 2024. The statute allows the continuation of grant funds to nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies that provide services to veterans. The Board of Veterans Affairs continues to provide consultation regarding funding decisions, rules and policies for this program. This significant step will ensure the continued support of vital services to veterans in Colorado.

FY2013-2014 Veterans Assistance Grantees

Grantee	Location	Purpose	Amount Awarded
Alamosa County	Alamosa	Homeless Vet Assistance	\$20,200
Sobriety House, Inc.	Denver	Homeless Vet Assistance	\$50,000
Pikes Peak Work Force Center	Colorado Springs	Employment/Vet Assistance	\$20,000
CO Veterans Resource Coalition	Colorado Springs	Homeless Shelter	\$164,505
DAV Chapter 48	Durango	Homeless Vet Assistance	\$45,375
Providers' Resource Clearing House	Aurora	Furniture for Vets	\$34,800
DAV Chapter #44	Dolores	Homeless Vet Assistance	\$32,120
American Legion Post 203	Pueblo	Standdown/Vet Assistance	\$12,000
American Military Family	Brighton	Mental Health/Therapy	\$20,000
Denver Options, Inc.	Denver	Homeless Vet Program	\$10,000
Comitis Crisis Center, Inc.	Aurora	Homeless Vet Program	\$48,500
Catholic Charities	Denver	Homeless Vet Program/Vehicle	\$76,850
Bo Matthews Center for Excellence	Denver	Veterans Housing	\$200,000
La Puente Home, Inc.	Alamosa	Vet Assistance	\$9,450
A Strong Tower Ministry	Denver	Homeless Ex-Offenders	\$37,200
Governor's Office	Denver/Statewide	Homeless Programs	\$150,000
Park County Senior Coalition	Fairplay	Vet Assistance	\$29,000
American Legion Post 143	Bayfield	Homeless Vet Program	\$10,000
Total			\$970,000

Attachment 3

STATE OF COLORADO

DEPARTMENT OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Division of Veterans Affairs

1355 South Colorado Blvd Suite 113.

Denver, CO 80222

(303) 284-6077 ~ (303) 284-3163 (Fax)

Ben Mestas
Director

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Governor

Major General
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The Adjutant General



COLORADO DIVISION OF VETERAN AFFAIRS

2014 REPORT ON SERVICE TO VETERANS

October 31, 2014

For the Colorado Department of Military and Veteran Affairs
Annual Report to the Governor

Chairman William Robinson
Colorado Board of Veteran Affairs

Re: State Board of Veteran Affairs Annual Report to the Governor

Dear Mr. Robinson:

It is with great pleasure and pride that I submit to you the 2014 Report on Service to Veterans. 2014 was marked by continued outreach to Colorado Veterans. State Veteran Service Officers regularly reached out to our veterans within our State's public and private nursing homes to our veterans freshly transitioning from active duty at any one of Colorado's military installations. With veterans continued need for assistance in handling issues ranging from Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome to navigating forms and regulations regarding their Post-911 GI-Bill Benefits the need for knowledgeable and committed Service Officers at the State and County level has never been greater.

Executive Summary: In 2014 Colorado Veterans continued to make an impact on their local economies. Colorado saw an over-all increase by \$400 million and reached the \$2.5 billion mark in total benefits, of which \$324 million went to our youngest veterans in the form of education and vocational rehabilitation benefits. The Colorado Division of Veterans Affairs team directly affected \$1.2 billion in direct pay outs to veterans in the form of compensation and pension benefits. The Division of Veterans Affairs team features 18 full time employees, which includes staff at our Veteran Memorial Cemetery in Grand Junction, grant administrators and State veteran service Officers. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reported the Colorado Veteran population at 390,824, which was a decline from last year by 4,789. This reduction indicated the continued passing of our State's WW II veterans. With an aging population of Vietnam Veterans, the expenditures specifically for VA Healthcare will continue, as will the care for our youngest generation of Veterans from Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan.

Summary of Significant Activities and Accomplishments:

Outreach continued as a major mission for the Division with our case officers reaching out to various programs. One of these programs, the Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome Residential Rehabilitation and Treatment Program (PTSDRRTP) conducted at the VA 7th Wing Mental Health Facility was a significant part of Division outreach in terms of veterans severity of disabilities. PTSD RRTP Doctor Mandy Rabenhorst provided a comprehensive brief to State and County Service Officers during the County Veteran Service Officer Annual Training Conference. That training allowed us to further coordinate with her for utilization of our Division as the representatives for veterans going thru the PTSD RRTP. The majority of PTSD RRTP veterans served in Iraq and Afghanistan, and current enrollment shows that trend will continue.

Summary of Program Assessment:

The following information is submitted for your consideration:

COLORADO DIVISION OF VETERAN AFFAIRS		
Date: 30OCT2014		
	OFFICE ACTIVITIES	
ITEM	2014	2013
New Power of Attorneys	6225	6853
Letters to VA	8857	10404
New Claims	10511	9135
Telephone Calls	25271	17652
Health Care Enrollment	1534	1432
Certified Appeals Sent to BVA	130	210
Referendum E Veteran Property Tax Exemption	Running Total 5691	Running Total 5011

INTERMENTS IN VETERAN MEMORIAL CEMETARY OF WESTERN COLORADO	
Date 30SEP2014	
Veteran	2,188
Spouse	760
Dependent	8
TOTAL	2,956

Short and Long term goals: The Division approved 680 applications over the last year for the Veterans Property Tax Exemption (REF E). A great step forward for Colorado Veteran's was the passing of HB 14-1373 which allows our Veteran's widow's to continue to receive Colorado Property Tax exemption after the death of the veteran in cases where the exemption was approved while the veteran was still living.

In streamlining our business model for how we handle compensation and pension claims, our efforts with the VA bore fruit. This is most evident in the data listed in Office Activities table above. The data reflects a decrease in count of Letters to VA by over 1,500. This is indicative of the change in programs implemented by the VA in coordination with their State partners. The new Fully Developed Claim (FDC) Program allowed our veterans to provide all claim forms, supporting documents, and private medical evidence (if applicable) up front with the initial submission of the claim. The incentive provided was a faster claim processing time. Our Division made every effort to adhere to this program and our data shows the program worked in minimizing the number of letters going back and forth between the VA and veterans during the evidence gathering phase of VA claims. The result was also a faster claim turn-around time in the FDC program by at least 90 days on average.

Challenges and Goals: By 2025 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs predicts veterans from our Post 9-11 conflicts as the largest group, followed by our Vietnam Veterans and Korean War era Veterans. Currently our Vietnam Era veterans slightly edge out all other groups in terms of population size. This change also correlates with the VA's predicted trend that by 2040 our nation will see the largest population of female and minority veterans in its history.

Our success is measured by the amount of veterans that continue to seek us out as their representative. With this newest generation of diverse veterans most comfortable in utilizing online applications, social media such as Facebook, we will continue to adapt to the latest technologies for outreach. No matter what the technology, nothing replaces the sound advocacy our Division provides in assisting veterans in obtaining VA Benefits. The mediums may have changed, but the laws and requirements surrounding VA benefits have not.

As our Armed Forces continue missions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and throughout the world, our Nation's leaders will continue to call upon the myriad of units home based in Colorado. In that regard we will continue to serve Colorado Veterans as they complete their tours of duty and return home to a grateful community here in Colorado.

Administrative Condition: Our Division reported last year our use of the web based program called VETRASPEC for claim management and claim filing for benefits with the Federal Department of Veteran Affairs. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is in the process of partnering with VETRASPEC programmers on an initiative called Digits to Digits, whereby claims entered in to the State's VETRASPEC system will automatically populate into the VA's programs for claims processing. This will potentially provide the State with significant cost savings in terms of paper expense. With the assistance of my staff, Colorado Counties were able to service 10,511 new entitlement claims in VETRASPEC over the last year.

I would be happy to meet with you to discuss the Division's recommendations and its annual report. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or Diane Ricci, my Deputy Director at 303-284-6077.

Sincerely,



Ben Mestas, Director
Colorado Division of Veteran Affairs

Attachment 4



COLORADO
Department of Local Affairs
Division of Property Taxation

October 9, 2014

Reuben Mestas, Director
Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
1355 South Colorado Blvd., Building C, Suite 113
Denver, Colorado 80230

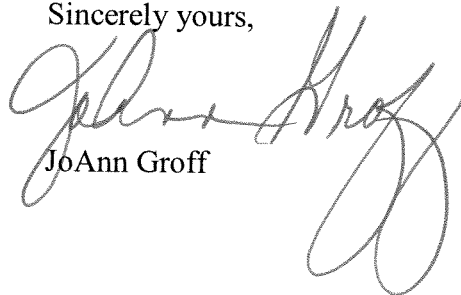
Dear Mr. Mestas:

Per your request, I have provided below the number of properties and the exempted taxes for disabled veterans who have received the property tax exemption in 2013, payable in 2014. This data is provided to our office by the Colorado State Treasurer's Office. My office administers the program to determine if a veteran or a senior has applied on more than one property in the state and answers questions of county offices and taxpayers regarding the program. At this time we do not provide any other direct services to veterans in Colorado beyond the administration of the property tax exemption program.

For the 2013 tax year, property taxes paid in 2014, 3,829 properties owned by disabled veterans qualified for the exemption. The actual value of the exempted properties is \$307,559,717.00, and the total exempted property tax amount for these properties is \$2,083,129.31. We have not yet verified the status of the 2014 tax year applicants; those applications will be reviewed in October, and any exempt property tax amount will be calculated after those taxes are due in 2015.

Should you require accurate figures regarding the payment for the property tax exemption for disabled veterans, please contact Charles Scheibe, Chief Financial Officer at the State of Colorado Treasurer's Office located at 200 East Colfax Avenue, Room 140 Denver, Colorado 80203-1722. Other questions regarding the program or any other activities of the Division of Property Taxation please contact me.

Sincerely yours,



JoAnn Groff

JAG:rmb



Attachment 5

JOHN HICKENLOOPER
Governor

ELLEN GOLOMBEK
Executive Director

WILLIAM B. DOWLING
Employment and Training Director

ELISE LOWE-VAUGHN
Workforce Programs, Policy and
Strategic Initiatives Director



DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

633 17th Street, 7th Floor
Denver, Colorado 80202-3627

November 10, 2014

William Robinson, Chairman,
Colorado Board of Veterans
Department of Military and Veteran Affairs
1333 South Colorado Blvd. Building C, Suite 113
Denver, CO 80222

Dear Mr. Robinson,

The following information reflects the annual accomplishments of the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment, Veterans Employment and Training Program. We continue to dedicate ourselves to providing Colorado's Veterans with outstanding employment and training services with the goal of providing Colorado Businesses with qualified and viable Veteran job seekers.

The enclosed report outlines the outreach services provided to the Veterans by the Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG), Wagner Peyser and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) staff. We continue to align our Veterans Program to reflect the new guidelines outlined in the U.S. Department of Labor/VETS Veterans Program Letters, particularly VPL 03-14 which clearly refocuses and delineates the duties and responsibilities of the Local Veteran Employment Representative (LVER) and the Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialist. These 36 individuals are strategically located within county and state operated Workforce centers that have the highest veteran population.

Our mission is to provide veterans and transitioning service members with the employment services and training needed to succeed in the 21st Century workforce by meeting labor-market demands with qualified veterans. As always, we look forward to our continued partnership with the Division of Veterans Affairs Office as we work towards meeting the employment needs of Colorado's Veterans and their families. Should you have any questions is regards to this report please feel free to contact Elaine Edon, State Veterans Program Coordinator at (303) 318-8937 or elaine.edon@state.co.us. Again we look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Elise Lowe-Vaughn
Director
Workforce Programs, Policy and Strategic Initiatives

Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE)

PY 2013 Report on Service to Veterans

July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014

For the Colorado Department of Military and Veteran Affairs Annual Report to the Governor

The Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) delivers the full array of labor and employment services to Colorado veterans throughout the 59 State and County-run One Stop Workforce Centers and satellite offices around the state. CDLE and County Labor and Employment Specialists provide veterans with employment services that include job matching and referral to posted job openings, vocational and career guidance, labor market information, workshops on resume preparation and conducting effective job searches. One Stop Workforce Centers also refer eligible and qualified veterans to appropriate Workforce Investment Act (WIA) training programs as well as referrals to skilled trade apprenticeship programs throughout the state. Our One Stops make referrals to various Federal, State, and local agencies in the community that provide supportive services to those in need.

As illustrated in the chart below 42,669 veterans registered for employment assistance on the Department's job bank, Connecting Colorado. Connecting Colorado is the department's website where job seekers and employers are able to meet each other's employment needs. Employers are able to view resumes, search for qualified candidates, post job openings, and learn of the hiring incentives offered by the state. Veterans can post resumes, conduct job searches, access employment resources using self-directed virtual employment tools or receive in person staff assisted services through their local workforce center.

Of the 42,669 registered veterans, 25,846 or 61% used their local workforce centers to receive staff assisted services. Those who receive staff assisted services are more likely to have a higher success rate in entered employment, employment retention and average wages. For this reason, CDLE strongly encourages veterans to visit their local workforce centers to receive one on one staff assisted services. A comparison of PY 2011 and PY 2012 Veteran registrations by demographics and those who received staff assisted services are listed below.

Colorado Veteran Demographics of Veterans Serviced by Workforce Center Staff

	Total Vets	18-44	45-54	55+	Post 9/11	Disabled Vets <30%	Special Disabled >30%	Recently Separated
PY 2012	47,734	22,747	12,003	12,962	18,087	9,230	5,369	7,437
PY 2013	42,669	20,888	10,437	11,332	16,688	8,923	5,536	7,371
Received at Staff Assisted Service PY 13.	25,846 61%	11,831 57%	6,834 65%	7,174 63%	9,188 55%	5,563 63%	3,408 62%	3,549 48%

(Source: 9002)

Public Law 107-288 requires our department to provide priority of service to veterans in all programs funded by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL). This means eligible veterans are enrolled into programs or provided services ahead of non-veterans notwithstanding any other provision in law. CDLE has issued statewide guidance on this requirement and as a result, is in compliance with this federal mandate.

When a job is posted on Connecting Colorado, our system searches for qualified veterans first and places them at the top of all job referral listings ahead of non-veterans. Additionally, qualified veterans appear at the top of all employer generated electronic applicant referral list. Our system also places new job postings on a 24 hour “veteran” hold, allowing the veteran job seeker the first 24 hours to view job opportunities in which they are qualified for before non-veterans. As a consequence, the workforce centers referred nearly 20,175 or 47% of our registered veteran job seekers to a job compared to 38% of our non-veterans.

In addition to our State and County Labor and Employment Specialists who provide outstanding front-line services to all veterans, our department employs 29 full-time Disabled Veteran Outreach Program (DVOP) Specialists and 7 full-time Local Veteran Employment Representatives (LVER) staff who are assigned to Workforce Regions around the state. These positions are funded through a U.S. DOL Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) grant.

Our DVOP specialists provided staff assisted services to 3,944 registered veterans. Of the 3,944 veterans who received in person employment services, 2,373 or 60% received intensive employment services by the DVOP specialists. These veterans were considered most in need of intensive services in order to obtain viable employment. Delivery of services can be provided by using the case management approach. The following veterans received priority in the provision of intensive services: disabled, homeless, those released from incarceration, recently separated as well as veterans who have other barriers to employment. Intensive services require more staff time than regular employment services. Intensive services are designed to coordinate comprehensive employment plans to assure access to the necessary training and supportive services. Intensive services provide support during program participation and after job placement. Listed below is a breakdown by demographic of veterans who received Services from a DVOP last year:

Colorado Veteran Demographics of Veterans Serviced by DVOP Specialists

	Total Vets	18-44	45-54	55+	Post 9/11	Disabled Vets <30%	Special Disabled >30%	Recently Separated
PY 2013 Staff Assisted Services	3,944	1,961	1,076	905	1,789	1,335	866	758
PY13 Intensive Services	2,373 60%	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,086 60%	879 66%	596 69%	450 59%

(Source Vets 200 Report)

Our DVOP’s also conduct outreach to local Federal VA Vet centers throughout the state, and have made important linkages and partnerships with other service providers such as the Denver Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program (HVRP) office and local military installations as well as a host of non-profits and other service providers. Our DVOP specialists also assist in the “Homeless Veteran Stand Downs” that take place in Colorado Springs, Denver and Fort Collins. During these stand downs, homeless veterans are able to receive winter clothing, personal hygiene products, haircuts, hot meals, flu shots, dental exams, mental health resources as well as employment services.

Our department has placed one DVOP specialists at the Department of Corrections (DOC) in Denver's Re-Entry Facility with the responsibility of conducting outreach and employment transition workshops inside DOC facilities throughout the state for veterans within 12 months of release.

In addition, we have a DVOP placed on the Colorado State University campus in Fort Collins and another at the Department of Veteran Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Education department. These DVOP specialists case manage the veteran's transition from an educational training program into the workforce by providing employment assistance within 6 months to a year of their program completion date.

The LVER's primary role is to conduct employer relations on behalf of veterans advocating the valuable knowledge, skills and abilities the veterans bring to the workforce. They do this through job fairs, job search workshops, career events, employer panels and personal visits to the businesses themselves. During PY 2012 our LVER's have organized and hosted over 73 job fairs or employer specific hiring events at their local workforce centers. These events are designed to bring groups of veterans and employers together at a single event in order to quickly fill employer vacancies and provide veterans vocational and career guidance from private employers.

On May 14-15 and 21, 2014, our LVER's and DVOP specialists supported one of Colorado's largest collaborative hiring events, the Military and Veteran Employment Expos (MVEE). This three day event was a collaborative partnership between CDLE, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR), Pikes Peak American Workforce Center, Department of Veterans Affairs, the National Guard and other public, private, non-profit, faith based and community organizations. The first two days were dedicated to preparing the military service member and veteran for the job fair which was held on the third day. A total of eight employment focused classes were offered twice a day. Those who took 4 of the 8 classes were given a two hour early entrance into the job fair where they met face to face with 204 hiring employers. Over 900 Veterans registered for this event, with an additional 2,000 who attended the virtual job fair that ran simultaneously.

In PY 2013, Connecting Colorado received 374,760 job openings from 16,048 employers. Most of these job openings were a result of our active participation with Job Central. Job Central is the Internet's first public-service employment web site owned and managed by leading U.S. employers through their membership in Direct Employers Association enabling them to outreach through a network of 50 state sites and over 6,200 cities and communities. Participating employers are able to make their jobs available on a national nonprofit, public service employment network and to increase their recruiting outreach throughout the nation.

Again our main mission for providing quality service to Veterans is to see them succeed in the 21st Century workforce by meeting labor market demands. We work diligently to place them in meaningful and sustainable employment. As a department we ask the workforce center and JVSG staff to strive for three measurable outcomes: entered employment, employment retention and average wages rates. Our PY 2012 achievements in these areas are outlined in the chart below.

State Veteran Performance Outcomes

Workforce Center Program Measures_Program Year 2013

Wagner-Peyser One Stop Veteran Program Measures (Source 9002(D))	PY13 Achievements
Veterans Entered Employment (VEER)	52.73%
Veterans Employment Retention Rate (VERR)	78.40%
Veterans Average Earnings (VAE) Six Months	\$18,690
Disabled Veterans EER (DVEER)	48.04%
Disabled Veterans ERR (DVERR)	75.36%
Disabled Veterans AE (DVAE) Six months	\$19,751
Performance Targets for JVSG DVOP Specialists (Source: VETS 200 (A))	PY 13 Achievements
Intensive Services Provided to Veterans by DVOP Specialists Divided by Total Veterans and Eligible Persons Served by DVOP Specialists in the State	48.70%
Veterans Entered Employment Rate (VEER) Weighted	59%
Veterans Employment Retention Rate (VERR)	78.24%
Veterans Average Earnings (DVAE) Six Months (line 28 column C)	\$16,940
Disabled Veterans EER (DVEER)	49.01%
Disabled Veterans ERR (DVERR)	76.39%
Disabled Veterans AE (DVAE) Six Months	\$17,923

Attachment 6



COLORADO
Department of Revenue

Executive Director's Office

Physical Address:
1375 Sherman Street
Denver, CO 80203

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 17087
Denver, CO 80217-0087

June 10, 2014

Mr. William Conroy, Chairman
Colorado Board of Veterans Affairs
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
1355 S. Colorado Blvd., Building C, Suite 113
Denver, CO 80230

Dear Chairman Conroy,

Pursuant to C.R.S. 28-5-703 below you will find a list of the services that are provided by the State of Colorado, Department of Revenue.

With regard to tax services, we have no programs aimed specifically at veterans. We are aware of several statutes that speak to active members of the U.S. military C.R.S. 39-22-103(8)(b) which allows Colorado military personnel who are out of the country for 305 or more days in a year to classify their military income as non-resident for tax purposes, and C.R.S. 39-22-610 which allows a filing extension for military personnel in a combat zone. The extension, which defers interest and penalty, lasts 180 days after the particular assignment has ended.

Service Members Civil Relief Act and the Military Spouse Residency Relief Act

The Department continues to ensure that service members and their qualifying spouses under the protections of the Service Members Civil Relief Act and the Military Spouse Residency Relief Act continue to receive the services, protections and tax exemptions afforded to them by these Acts.

Deployed Military Motor Vehicle Taxes and Fees

Senate Bill 14-075 allows for a member of the U.S. Armed Forces to be exempt registration fees and pay a \$1.00 specific ownership tax for vehicles registered in Colorado while the service member is deployed outside the U.S. The service member must (1) show the Department (Motor Vehicle Office in the County of residence) that he/she is serving outside the U.S.; AND (2) filed a signed affidavit that the motor vehicle will not be operated on a highway while they are serving outside the U.S. If the service member has credit remaining on his/her motor vehicle at the time they are serving outside the U.S. the Department shall place that amount of credit into a "holding" account for the service member to apply to the payment of specific ownership tax and registration fees on any vehicle owned by the service member upon the return to the U.S.

Colorado VETS-2-TRUCKS Program

This program is designed for individuals who are currently serving, are close to military discharge, or were discharged within the last 90 days. They must have experience driving heavy military trucks with a safe driving record for at least the last two years. These veterans

may qualify for a Colorado Commercial Driver License (CDL) without having to take the commercial driver skills test.

On-Line Vehicle Registration

Forty-five counties allow online renewal of motor vehicle registrations. This will allow service members stationed outside of Colorado to maintain their vehicle registrations. This service may be accessed at <http://www.colorado.gov/revenue/dmv> - Vehicle Registration Renewal.

Military Identifier on Driver License

This program allows those service members that desire to have a military identifier to be added to their regular or commercial driver's license or identification card for no additional fee. The service member may choose between Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, National Guard or Navy. The service member must present either his/her valid military identification card or a DD214.

Veteran Designation on Identification Documents

House Bill 13-1119 allows a driver's license or identification card with a veteran identification to be sufficient documentation that a person is a veteran for the purposes of any benefit or preferences given to veterans by the State of Colorado or any political subdivision of Colorado.

Registration Late Fee

If the person who owns the vehicle is in the active military service of the United States and is serving outside the state when a registration period and grace period for renewal of registration for the vehicle end and the vehicle is not operated on any public highway of the state between the time the registration period and grace period end and the time the vehicle is reregistered will be exempt from paying a late fee. C.R.S. 42-3-112(3)(b)

The Division of Motor Vehicles has special accommodations for veterans registering vehicles in Colorado obtaining vehicle license plates as follows:

Alignment with the Service Members Civil Relief Act

On August 8, 2007 Colorado statutes were revised to align with the Service Members Civil Relief Act including clarifying the application of property tax laws and voter registration laws to service members. C.R.S. 42-3-104(9)

Authorization of Military Special License Plates for Motor Vehicles Owned by Trusts

The Department of Revenue is required to issue certain military special license plates for a motor vehicle owned by a trust if the trust is created for the benefit of a natural person who is qualified to receive the special license plate and the trust name includes a natural person who is qualified to receive the special license plate. C.R.S. 42-3-213(1)(g)

Civil Air Patrol License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person that supports the Civil Air Patrol. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(27)

Navy Seal License Plate

This plate may be issued to a natural person who has received an honorable discharge, is retired, or is an active or reserve member of the United States Navy Seals. To qualify for the plate, an applicant must submit a DD214 form issued by the United States Government and a

certification from the UDT/SEAL Association, Inc., the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the UDT/SEAL Association, Inc., or a successor organization. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(26)

U.S. Air Force License Plate

This plate may be issued to a serving member, honorably discharged or retired member of any component of the U.S. Air Force upon presenting a DD214 form issued by the U.S.

Government or any other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant is a serving member, honorably discharged or retired member of any component of the U.S. Air Force. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(17)

U.S. Army License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person upon presenting a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government, an honorable discharge from the U.S. Army, or sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the applicant is an active, reserve or retired member of the U.S. Army. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(12)

U.S. Army Fourth Infantry Division License Plate

This plate may be issued to a person who supports the U.S. Army Fourth Infantry Division. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(20)

U.S. Army Special Forces License Plate

This plate may be issued to a person who has received an honorable discharge or is an active or reserve member of the U.S. Army Special Forces upon presenting proof of honorable discharge or retirement or proof that the applicant is currently an active or reserve member of the U.S. Army Special Forces. The applicant must submit orders or DD214 form that shows an awarded prefix "3" or suffix "S" or a designation of "5G", 18/180 Series MOS, Special Forces Tab, OSS, or UNPIK-8240. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(18)

Bronze Star Medal License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person who has been awarded the Bronze Star medal. The applicant must present to the Department, a copy of the military order awarding the Bronze Star and a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government showing that the applicant received the award. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(14)(a)

Bronze Star with the "V" Medal License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person who has been awarded the Bronze Star with the "V" for valor distinction medal. The applicant must present to the Department, a copy of the military order awarding the Bronze Star with the "V" and a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government showing that the applicant received the award. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(14)(b)

U.S. Coast Guard License Plate

This plate may be issued to retired, honorably discharged, active, auxiliary, or reserve members of the U.S. Coast Guard upon presenting a DD214 form issued by the U.S. Government or

other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant has an honorable discharge or proof that the applicant is currently an active, auxiliary, or reserve member of the United State Coast Guard. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(16)

Distinguished Flying Cross License Plate

This plate may be issued to a natural person who has been awarded a Distinguished Flying Cross upon presenting a copy of the military order awarding the Distinguished Flying Cross or any other evidence. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(25)

Effective on and after August 6, 2014, Senate Bill 14-030 allows for one set of plates per applicant to be exempt from the one-time fee normally associated with specialty license plates and by payment of the required taxes and fees. Subsequent sets of plates per applicant will be issued upon payment of a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees.

Disabled Veteran License Plate

This plate may be issued to qualified applicants who provide documentation of authorization from either the Veteran's Administration or their branch of military service to support that they are 50% or more, permanently disabled due to a service connected injury. One set of plates may be issued without paying specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(5)

Disabled Veteran Handicap License Plate

This plate permits a mobility disabled veteran to park their vehicle, or a vehicle in which they are a passenger, in designated disability parking spaces. The application must meet two requirements for this plate. Qualified applicants must have (1) a 50% or more permanent, service connected disability AND; (2) a physical impairment verified in writing by a physician licensed to practice medicine in Colorado or a Commissioned Medical Officer. One set of these plates may be issued per applicant without paying the specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional Disabled Veteran license plates (not handicapped) may be issued upon payment of a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104, 42-3-204 and 42-3-213(5)(a)(II)

Fallen Service Member License Plate

This plate is issued to the current or past spouse, child, sibling, grandparent, or parent of a person who died in the line of duty while serving in the armed forces and deployed in a combat zone. The applicant for a Fallen Service Member license plate will be required to provide a DD214 form for the Fallen Service Member and other sufficient documentation to prove eligibility. The plate types include Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine and Navy. The first set of plates per applicant is exempt the one-time fee normally associated with specialty license plates and by payment of the required taxes and fees. Subsequent sets of plates per applicant will be issued upon payment of a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(15)

Effective on and after January 1, 2015 Senate Bill 14-132 removed the requirement that the service member died while "deployed in a combat zone" for the current or past spouse, child, sibling, grandparent, or parent of the service member for which they are being issued the license plate for.

Former Prisoner of War License Plate

This plate may be issued to individuals that were on active duty with the U.S. Armed Forces during a period of armed conflict and were incarcerated by an enemy of the U.S. One set of plates may be issued without paying specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. If a deceased former prisoner of war was issued a Former Prisoner of War license plate, the surviving spouse may retain the registration of the Former Prisoner of War license plate by paying all required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(3)

Honorably Discharged Veteran License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person who has received an honorable discharge from any branch of the U.S. Armed Services or who is retired from a branch of the Armed Services. The applicant must present the form DD214 or their honorable discharge documents to obtain this plate. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-231(4)

Korean War Veteran License Plate

This plate may be issued to any natural person upon providing proof that he/she was a member of the U.S. Armed Forces between June 27, 1950 and January 31, 1955. The applicant must present the form DD214 or other military separation papers that indicate the dates of time served in the Armed Forces. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(9)

Medal of Honor License Plate

This plate may be issued to qualified applicants who are a recipient of the Medal of Honor. The applicant must present to the Department, a letter of verification from the appropriate branch of the U.S. Armed Forces that the applicant has been awarded a Medal of Honor. These individuals may obtain one set of plates without paying the specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(7)

Medal of Valor License Plates

These plates may be issued to a natural person who has been awarded a military award for valor. When applying for this plate, the applicant must present a copy of the military order awarding the military award for valor, which includes the following awards:

Navy Cross

Air Force Cross

Distinguished Service Cross

Silver Star

These individuals may obtain one set of plates without paying the specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of the one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(10)

National Guard License Plate

This plate may be issued to an individual that provides proof that he/she is an active or retired member of the Colorado National Guard. An applicant shall submit a proof of eligibility form prepared by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs verifying active or retired status. If the owner of a vehicle registered with a National Guard license plate ceases to be an active member of the Colorado National Guard and has not qualified for retirement from the Colorado National Guard, such person shall return the special license plates to the Department upon expiration of the registration. Upon retiring from the Colorado National Guard, a person

wishing to retain such special license plates shall submit a verification or retired status that is issued by the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs to establish eligibility for retention of the plate. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-218

North American Aerospace Defense (NORAD) Command Commemorative License Plate

This plate may be issued to any person that desires to commemorate the North American Aerospace Defense Command's 50th anniversary. This plate is limited issue commemorative plate that will only be issued from July 1, 2008 through January 1, 2010, or when available inventory is depleted, whichever is later. Plates issued within this period may continue to use those plates after January 1, 2010 until they become damaged, destroyed, lost, stolen or unreadable. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. 42-3-213(19)

Operation Desert Shield/Storm License Plate

This plate may be issued to a natural person that provides a DD214 form issued by the United States Government or other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant is a veteran of the armed services who served between August 2, 1990, and February 28, 1991. The plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(24)

Pearl Harbor Survivor License Plate

This plate may be issued to qualified applicants who were members of the U.S. Armed Services on December 7th, 1941 and were stationed and present at Pearl Harbor located on the island of Oahu, during the hours of 7:55 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. (Hawaii Time) or offshore at a distance not to exceed three miles from the island. Additionally this individual must have received an honorable discharge from the U.S. Armed Services and hold a current membership in a national organization of survivors on the attack on Pearl Harbor. Applicants may obtain one set without paying the specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon paying a one-time fee of \$50.00 and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(6)

Purple Heart License Plate

This plate may be issued to qualified applicants who have been awarded a Purple Heart medal for wounds received in combat at the hands of an enemy of the United States. An applicant must present a copy of the military order awarding the Purple Heart medal or other sufficient evidence that indicates that the applicant received the Purple Heart medal. These individual may obtain one set of plates without paying specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(2)

U.S. Marine Corps License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof that he/she has received an honorable discharge, is retired or is an active or reserve member of the U.S. Marine Corps. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(8)

U.S. Navy License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof that he/she has been honorably discharged, is retired or is an active or reserve member of the U.S. Navy. The applicant must

submit the DD214 or other evidence to demonstrate that they are a qualified applicant. The plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(13)

Veteran of Afghanistan War License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof that he/she was a member of the U.S. Armed Services between October 7, 2001 and the end of the Afghanistan conflict. The applicant must submit the DD214 or other evidence to demonstrate that they are a qualified applicant. The plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(21)

Veteran of Iraq War License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof that he/she was a member of the U.S. Armed Services between March 20, 2003 and the end of the Iraq conflict. The applicant must submit the DD214 or other evidence to demonstrate that they are a qualified applicant. The plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(22)

Vietnam Veterans License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof of service in the U.S. Armed Forces during the Vietnam engagement, specifically, August 7, 1964 to January 27, 1973. Proof of service includes the DD214 or other evidence to demonstrate this requirement. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(11)

World War II Veteran License Plate

This plate may be issued to an applicant that provides proof that he/she was a veteran of the U.S. Armed Services between September 16, 1940, and July 25, 1947. The applicant must submit the DD214 or other documents to demonstrate that they are a qualified applicant. These individuals may obtain one set of plates without paying specific ownership tax and registration fees. Additional plates may be obtained upon payment of a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-104 and 42-3-213(23)

U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division License Plate

House Bill 14-1089 created the U.S. Army 10th Mountain Division license plate that the Department may begin issuing on and after January 1, 2015 to an honorably discharged, retired, reserve, or active member of the 10th Mountain Division of the United States Army. The applicant must submit a DD214 form issued by the United States Government or other evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the applicant is a veteran, a reserve member, or an active member of the 10th Mountain Division of the United State Army. This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and the required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(29)

USS Colorado Submarine License Plate

Senate Bill 14-041 created the USS Colorado Submarine license plate that the Department may begin issuing on and after January 1, 2015 to a natural person who supports the USS Colorado Submarine (SSN-788). This plate may be obtained upon paying a one-time \$50.00 fee and required taxes and fees. C.R.S. 42-3-213(28)

As of January 1, 2014, the Department records indicate that 128,591 vehicles were registered in the State of Colorado with one of the veteran plates listed above.

Between January 2014 and the present, the Department has hired eight (8) veterans. We continue to be grateful for the services provided by our veterans and we as individuals are mindful of their contributions to our country and ourselves when we render them service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara J. Brohl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "B".

Barbara J. Brohl
Executive Director

Attachment 7



COLORADO

Parks and Wildlife

Department of Natural Resources

1313 Sherman Street, Room 618
Denver, Colorado 80203
Phone (303) 866-3437

October 20, 2014

Colorado Board of Veterans
Department of Military and Veterans Affairs
William Robinson, Chairman
1355 South Colorado Blvd. Building C, Suite 113
Denver, CO 80230

Dear Mr. Robinson:

Per your annual request, under State Statute and Wildlife Commission regulation, the Division of Parks and Wildlife offers, the following types of licenses and services to our states' veterans or active military:

C.R.S 33-12-106 – (1) Any resident who displays on the resident's vehicle a Colorado disabled veteran's license plate pursuant to section 42-3-304 (3) (a), C.R.S., shall be allowed free entrance to any state park or recreation area, not to include campgrounds, on any day of the year such park or area is open. For the purpose of this section, display of such license plates shall entitle the disabled veteran and passengers in such veteran's vehicle to enter such park or recreation area free of charge.

C.R.S 33-12-106 – (2.3) The commission may promulgate rules to allow free entrance to any state park or recreation area, not to include campgrounds, yurts, or other amenities and services offered, for veterans on one day each year. The commission may determine by rule which day veterans are allowed free entrance to state parks and recreation areas.

Commission Regulations – CCR 445 -#700-2(j) Any vehicle occupied by a current, reserve or honorably discharged member of any United States military service, on the State observance of Veteran's Day. At least one form of past or present military identification shall be presented at the Park entrance. Acceptable forms of military identification include:

- DD214;
- Active, retired or veteran military cards;
- The display of military license plates.

In addition to those very specific programs, Veterans may also qualify for:

C.R.S 33-12-103.5 (1) – Columbine annual pass - As used in this section, unless the context otherwise requires, a person is "disabled" if the person has been determined to be totally and permanently disabled by the social security administration, the division of worker's compensation or pursuant to rule or regulation of the division.



The current fee for the Columbine annual pass is \$14.00 and also provides entry into any of our 42 State Parks. Again, this pass does not provide for further discounts such as camping or cabin/yurt rentals. Disabled Veteran's are encouraged to apply for a Columbine Pass even if they have the Disabled license plate. The applicant must be a Colorado resident and complete an application at either our Denver office or one of our Regional Offices. If the applicant is on VA disability, they may contact the Veteran's Administration to request a letter of documentation as to their disability. In return, The Veteran's Administration can provide a form letter which will fulfill the required documentation.

Veterans 64 years of age or older that are Colorado residents may also qualify for either the Aspen Leaf (Senior Citizen) Annual Pass at a cost of \$60 per year.

C.R.S 33-4-104 – (1) Any active or retired member of the United States armed forces while stationed as a resident patient at any United States armed forces hospital or convalescent station located within Colorado, any resident patient at a veterans administration hospital ...may obtain a fishing license free of charge, valid for taking fish during the period of residency only, under rules and regulations of the commission.

(2) Any Colorado resident on active duty outside this state with any branch of the armed forces of the United States may obtain, from the division of wildlife, a fishing license free of charge, valid for taking fish while such person is in this state on temporary leave from such duty, but not to exceed a total of thirty days during any year. (3) (a) Any resident of this state who has received a purple heart for service in the United States armed forces or who is a disabled veteran may obtain from the division of wildlife, free of charge, a lifetime resident combination small game hunting and fishing license.

Commission Regulation #206(B)(4)(f) Wounded Warrior Hunting Licenses – The Director may make certain deer, elk, and pronghorn licenses available to qualified participants in any United States Armed Services wounded Warrior programs.

1. Applicants must be members of the United States Armed Forces, who are residents of, or stationed in, Colorado returning from post-September 11, 2001 overseas contingency operations who have been so severely injured during combat, including combat-related support activities that they will require years of intense, ongoing care or assistance. Additionally, applicants must be members of a United States Armed Services Wounded Warrior program, as defined in 33-4-102(1.9) C.R.S., and must be assigned to a military medical treatment facility at the time of application for this program.

Commission Regulation - #206(B)(4)(h)(1) (bb) In addition to the \$3 application fee, an unsuccessful applicant (except youth as defined by 33-4-117 C.R.S., lifetime license holders and Colorado resident military personnel on active duty outside Colorado), or one who applies using a first choice hunt code established for the purpose of accumulating a preference point only, for deer, elk, pronghorn or bear will be assessed a \$25 fee to receive a preference point unless they have purchased one of the following: an annual license (fishing, small game or resident combination small game/fishing license, furbearer) for the year previous to which they are seeking a preference point; any big game license for the previous year or a current draw license for the species for which they are seeking a preference point. The \$25 fee, per species, shall

entitle the hunter to preference points for any unsuccessful deer, elk, pronghorn or bear application in that year.

Commission Regulation-#206(B)(4)(h)(1)(ee) In lieu of applying through the regular limited license draw, any active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who is stationed at any military facility in Colorado and actively deployed outside the United States, or any active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who is a Colorado resident and is deployed outside the United States, shall, upon their return to the United States, be eligible to apply for preference points for any limited license draw that occurred during their absence. Applications for preference points shall be made on forms provided by the Division and filed within six months upon the member's return to the United States.

Commission Regulation- #206(B) (6) (d) Any active duty member of the United States Armed Forces stationed at any military facility in Colorado and actively deployed outside the United States, or any active duty member of the United States Armed Forces who is a Colorado resident and is deployed outside the United States, shall be allowed a preference for the purchase of leftover licenses prior to their sale to the general public.

As of October 19, 2014 the Division has issued license year-to-date 674 free combination small game and fishing licenses to veterans with disabilities; we have received no requests for military leftover license privileges and no requests for military applications for preference points and have issued 3 Wounded Warrior big game licenses.

We look forward to continuing to serve those who have sacrificed so much. Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bob D. Broscheid', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Bob D. Broscheid
Director, Colorado Division of Park and Wildlife

Cc: Mike King – Executive Director, Department of Natural Resources
Gary Thorson – Assistant Director, I & E Branch, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Henrietta Turner – Manager, License Administration, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
File