



Director's Message

A Monthly Update
From Your WDVA



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2009 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

It's that time of year again! The 2009 Legislative Session began on January 12 and will run for 105 days.

Many bills impacting veterans and military personnel have been introduced. You can keep up to date on the status of bills by visiting www.dva.wa.gov clicking on *Public Information* and then *Legislative Updates*. You can also receive a weekly update by signing up for the Legislative Updates ListServ at <http://listserv.wa.gov/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=wdva&A=1>

VETERAN / SERVICEMEMBER OWNED BUSINESS

Is your business one of the 430 listed on the WDVA Veteran and Servicemember Owned Business Registry?

Only businesses that are registered on this site are eligible to take advantage of the Veterans Linked Deposit Program, which can reduce the interest rate of your qualifying business loans by 2%!

Sign up today at www.dva.wa.gov.

ORTING FLOODS

I'd like to personally thank the Superintendent of the Washington Soldiers Home, Quindola Crowley and the entire staff of the Soldiers Home and Veterans Home for springing into action during the flooding that occurred on January 7. Much of the City of Orting was ordered to evacuate and while the Soldiers Home was not under the evacuation order, the staff at both facilities were prepared for the worst case scenario. I am confident that if we had been ordered to evacuate, our Soldiers Home residents would have been welcomed and well cared for by the staff at Retsil.

AGENCY UPDATE

Long time WDVA employee Jerry Towne retired at the end of January to begin a new chapter in his life. As we bid farewell to Jerry and wish him well in his retirement, I would like to announce that Richard Stewart was been asked to fill Jerry's role beginning February 2, 2009.

First, let me say a few words about Jerry Towne and the wonderful work he has done for WDVA over the years. Jerry worked for WDVA for nearly 24 years. He fulfilled the duties of Field Office Manager, Superintendent and most recently the King County Veterans Program Manager. Jerry has a heart for doing the right thing for veterans and their families and has always stepped up to handle whatever challenge was

placed before him. I know many of you will join me in thanking Jerry for his many years of dedicated service to Washington's Veterans.

Second, many of you know that the King County Veterans Program has had a wonderful partnership with WDVA since 1995. This partnership has allowed the development of innovative programs, which ultimately have saved the county thousands of dollars. Because the King County Incarcerated Veterans Reintegration Program is so important, and because we are also developing a new program with additional King County levy dollars (the new program will provide employment services for veterans who are at, or below, the poverty level) we have asked Richard Stewart to move from the VA Regional Office to the King County Veterans Program.

Many of you have worked with Richard in his capacity as the Program Manager for the Veterans Service Organization contracts, and his role in coordinating the annual VSO Training Conference. He will maintain some the VSO contract functions, but with the cancellation of the 2009 Service Officer Training, the majority of his time will be spent on the King County Program.

Please join me in wishing Jerry and Richard well in their new endeavors!

On a final note, I'd like to thank you for your continued patience during these unsettling times. Please rest assured that the WDVA management team and I are working with leaders in the Governor's Office and the Legislature to maintain our budget so we can continue providing the same level of first rate services to veterans and their families. The King County Program is one example of how state and local government can work together to accomplish this goal and how we can leverage federal and county funding to provide services and be a good value for state resources. As the legislative and budgeting processes move forward it is likely that many creative solutions to our state's budget crisis will be put forward. We will continue to post budget and legislative updates on the WDVA web page (www.dva.wa.gov), but please don't hesitate to ask if you have questions about a particular proposal. You can reach me at john@dva.wa.gov or (360) 725-2152.