



July 2, 2009

VAAC / COMMANDER'S CALL JULY 9

Please join us on Thursday, July 9 at Highline Community College for a joint Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee and Commander's Call meeting. This is an opportunity for you to hear and be heard on important veterans issues!

The meeting will run from 10:00am – 12:00pm. Directions and an agenda are available at www.dva.wa.gov, click on Public Events.

CEMETERY UPDATE

As reported last month, bids submitted for the cemetery construction project were opened on June 16. Bid information has been sent to the Federal VA State Cemetery Grants Program and is currently under review.

On July 1, a public hearing was held in Spokane County that resulted in the award of a Conditional Use Permit. The cemetery property is zoned for rural traditional or conservation purposes and this permit is required to allow the property to be used as a cemetery. In addition to the Conditional Use Permit, we recently completed the environmental assessment and historic preservation documents and we are working on obtaining the final building permit.

My thanks go to Spokane County for the outstanding support they are providing as this project moves forward.

VETERAN FRIENDLY CAMPUSES

With the start of the Post 9/11 GI Bill this August, colleges and universities are preparing for an increase in the number of veterans on campus.

WDVA is working with the Military Department, Higher Education Coordinating Board, State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to serve these student veterans and their families.

In addition to providing information to campus staff and faculty on how to help veterans succeed in their academic lives, our partnership encourages referrals to WDVA so that we can help veterans in other aspects of their lives.

By sharing best practices and providing information on the benefits and services available for our state's veterans, this partnership will help us connect with veterans and families that we may not otherwise have contact with.

More information on a ceremony to formally sign this agreement will be posted to the Public Events website as soon as it is available. www.dva.wa.gov

FIRST RESPONDER TRAINING

WDVA PTSD Program Director, Tom Schumacher, has been working with the DSHS Mental Health Division to conduct three workshops for first responders. These first responders include law enforcement, mental health, crisis intervention, tribal crisis providers and others. One workshop was held in June and two are scheduled for July.

The goal is to provide information on what works and what doesn't work when responding to a crisis involving a veteran and to provide information on resources available to the veteran. The sessions also address issues of traumatic brain injury and veteran / military culture.

ARMED FORCES LICENSE PLATES

Since 2006, Washingtonians have had the opportunity to purchase special Armed Forces License Plates for our cars, trucks, motorcycles, trailers and RV's. As of the end of June, over 10,800 Armed Forces License Plates are on the road.

Thank you for your continued interest in the plates and for spreading the word that these plates are building the State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake!