



# Director's Message

*A Monthly Report from the Washington State Department of Veterans Affairs*



Director John Lee

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## **SUPERINTENDENT SELECTED FOR WASHINGTON VETERANS HOME**

I am pleased to announce that Col. Al Knight, USA Retired, has been selected as superintendent for the Washington Veterans Home. He will begin on July 17.



Al served as the Support Battalion Commander for the 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division at Ft. Lewis. As the Support Battalion Commander, he was responsible for all the logistical support, including medical services provided to a brigade of over 3000

soldiers. After retiring from active duty, Al was hired by Patriots Landing, a community for military retirees in DuPont, WA, which includes an assisted living facility. He has also been very active in Veterans Service Organizations at both the state and national level.

I have absolute confidence that Al will provide exceptional leadership and become valuable part of the WDVA team. Please join me in making him feel welcome.

## **WASHINGTON COMMUNITIES PLAN SEND-OFFS FOR NATIONAL GUARD MEMBERS**

Washington's 81st Brigade will deploy 3,200 citizen soldiers in mid-August. As individual soldiers and their families make preparations for the long separation, communities around the state are showing their support by hosting departure ceremonies or other community sponsored events to let the soldiers know how much they will be missed and let their families know they have a community network ready to lend a hand.

You can get involved by helping to plan the event, by sharing information on the event, or by attending and showing your support. As information is available on the departure ceremonies, it will be posted to the WDVA [Public Events Page](#). You can also contact Heidi Audette at [heidia@dva.wa.gov](mailto:heidia@dva.wa.gov) for more information.

## **VETERAN OWNED BUSINESSES TAKING ADVANTAGE OF LOWER INTEREST LOANS**

I am proud to announce that on June 26, the day after the Veteran/Servicemember Owned Business Linked Deposit Program was announced, the first application was received and approved!

The Linked Deposit Program improves access to capital for certified Veteran and Servicemember Owned Businesses by decreasing interest rates on small business loans up to 2%!

More information on the Veteran/Servicemember Owned Business Linked Deposit Program is available at:

<http://www.dva.wa.gov/Linked%20Deposit.html>

## **Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery**

In the May update, I shared with you that several members of the Governance Committee were planning to travel to WA D.C. to meet with staff from the Federal VA State Cemetery Grant Program. This meeting did take place and I am happy to report that WDVA and the Eastern WA Cemetery Governance Committee have met all criteria for the 2008 Grant. The final grant announcement will be made by the Federal VA in August.

The next meeting of the Governance Committee is scheduled for August 6, 2008 at 4:30 pm in the Spokane Airport Conference Room.

## **WASHINGTON STATE ONE OF TEN SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN VETERANS POLICY ACADEMY**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMSHA) is sponsoring a Veterans Policy Academy which runs from August 10 - 13 in Bethesda, Maryland.

The Returning Veterans and Their Families Strategic Planning Conference and Policy Academy provides the opportunity for leaders in Washington State to better plan and coordinate community based services for returnees. Washington's application was strongly supported by Governor Gregoire and a member of her policy staff will be one of the participants traveling to the academy in August.

I am honored to serve as the Team Leader for Washington's ten person team and will be accompanied by other WDVA staff and leaders from the Department of Social and Health Services, Military Department and Employment Security Department.

## **VETERANS CONSERVATION CORPS ACADEMY IN 2ND YEAR**

During the 2008 School Year, the Conservation Corps Academy will welcome 25 students at Green River Community College, 10 students at Lake Washington Technical College, 13 students at Olympic Community College and 12 students at Spokane Community College.

The Academy provides opportunities for veterans suffering from PTSD or War Related Trauma to participate in a certification program. Past participants have successfully transitioned to jobs, started their own business or went on to continue their education. Veterans in the program receive a \$1,000 stipend and are also connected with GI Bill and other VA Benefits. For more information, visit:

[http://www.dva.wa.gov/vet\\_conservation\\_corps.html](http://www.dva.wa.gov/vet_conservation_corps.html)