

## **Previous State Veterans Cemetery Updates**

(Taken from Monthly WDVA Director's Messages  
available at: <http://www.dva.wa.gov/Director's%20message.html> )

### **SEPTEMBER 2009**

Thank you to all of the veteran leaders and community members who witnessed the presentation of \$8.8 million from Mr. Frank Salvas with the Federal VA State Cemetery Grant Service.

I am so proud that construction is underway and taking place with the support and backing of veterans in eastern WA and that both companies we've contracted with, JGM Landscape Architects and Bouten Construction Company, are local Washington State companies!

I invite you to check the Cemetery webpage regularly to keep up to date on what is happening. [http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern\\_wa\\_vet\\_cemetery.html](http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern_wa_vet_cemetery.html)

### **AUGUST 2009**

I am excited to share that the Federal VA State Cemetery Grants Program announced final approval of the \$8.8 million grant to build Washington's first State Veterans Cemetery.

The construction project is expected to bring over 100 jobs to the area and the cemetery will employ a team of eight staff once fully operational.

Pre-construction meetings are already taking place with the Spokane-based firm, Bouten Construction Company, that was selected as the general contractor for the project.

A ceremony is planned for September 2, 2009, at the Spokane Regional Business Center when officials from the Federal VA State Cemetery Grant Program will be on-site to formally present the check.

Visit the Veterans Cemetery web site to find out more:  
[www.dva.wa.gov/eastern\\_wa\\_vet\\_cemetery.html](http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern_wa_vet_cemetery.html)

### **JULY 2009**

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.

### **JUNE 2009**

#### **Cemetery Update**

Many thanks to everyone who participated in the Groundbreaking Ceremony on Memorial Day! This wonderful occasion would not have been possible without the donations and efforts put forth by dedicated Veterans and the Medical Lake and Spokane communities! I

am excited to see the project enter into the next phase and will continue to share updates and pictures on the project throughout the summer months.



Photo courtesy of Jeff T. Green.

Bid documents for the project are due by June 16. For contractors interested in the project, visit the Department of General Administration website at: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ga/apps/BidCal/default.aspx> and click on Project 07-216, Eastern State Veterans Cemetery / Medical Lake.

#### **APRIL 2009**

##### **You Are Invited!**

May 25 is the [Ceremonial Groundbreaking](#) for the State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake, WA! The ceremony will take place at 1:00pm on the grounds of the Cemetery. If you need any additional information, please contact Rich Cesler at: [richardc@dva.wa.gov](mailto:richardc@dva.wa.gov).

Lead contractor JGM is working now to have the construction bid documents out next month to allow bids to be received in June.

#### **MARCH 2009**

##### **Cemetery Update**

A Groundbreaking Ceremony will take place on Memorial Day, May 25 on the grounds of the State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake. A formal invitation to all veterans and community members, including the ceremony time and program details, will be available on the cemetery website in the coming weeks.

[http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern\\_wa\\_vet\\_cemetery.html](http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern_wa_vet_cemetery.html)

I am very pleased to report that our cemetery construction project reached a major milestone in February. The Federal VA provided the go-ahead to begin the design and construction phase! Lead contractor, JGM, is working hard to have construction bid documents available in May with bid opening scheduled for mid-June. Our goal will be to move this project forward as quickly as possible, but rest assured we will take the necessary time to ensure that our first State Veterans Cemetery is a place of honor for our veterans.

#### **JANUARY 2009**

##### **Veterans Cemetery**

On December 16, 2008, Frank Salvas, the Federal VA Director of the State Cemetery Grant Program along with several other Federal VA Cemetery Staff Members, met with the Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery Project Team and Governance Committee.

The goal of the meeting was to reach an agreement on a number of issues that had caused our Master Plan approval to be delayed. After visiting the site and going over each

issue, our partners at the Federal VA agreed that the Master Plan we had presented would serve the needs of the Eastern Washington veterans community.

We expect to receive the formal approval for the Master Plan any day and will then move forward with the design and construction phase.

The next meeting of the Governance Committee is February 4, 2009. For more information on the project you can e-mail [cemetery@dva.wa.gov](mailto:cemetery@dva.wa.gov).

### **DECEMBER 2008**

#### **Veterans Cemetery**

The Cemetery Governance Committee continues to work with the Federal VA State Cemetery Grant Program. The next step in the process is for WDVA to receive final approval on our Master Plan.

Once the plan is approved, the construction team can move forward with the cemetery design. A meeting with the Federal VA is being scheduled in order to determine what additional information or revisions are needed to the Master Plan.

### **JULY 2008**

#### **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.

### **MAY 2008**

#### **Eastern WA State Veterans Cemetery**

On May 20, a team from WDVA, the Cemetery Governance Committee and JGM will travel to Washington D.C. to meet with representatives of the Federal VA State Cemetery Grants Program.

The purpose of the meeting is to review WDVA's Cemetery Master Plan submission which includes the full Master Plan Report, estimates and architectural narratives, a Wetlands Report & Delineation by Towey Ecological Services, a GeoEngineers Geptech Report and Full Size Master Plan Drawings.

The in-person meeting will allow for a thorough review of all documentation and provide the ability for questions to be asked and answered at one time.

### **APRIL 2008**

#### **Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery**

On March 19 nearly one hundred veterans, servicemembers and community representatives watched as a sign marking the location of the first State Veterans Cemetery in Eastern Washington was unveiled. View photos of the unveiling at:

[http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern\\_wa\\_vet\\_cemetery.html](http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern_wa_vet_cemetery.html) The Governance Committee will meet again on April 9 at the Spokane Airport.

### **MARCH 2008**

### **State Veterans Cemetery**

The Cemetery Advisory Committee will meet on Wednesday, March 5 at 2:00pm at the Spokane Airport. During the meeting the Advisory Committee will select the three plans that will be forwarded to the National Cemetery Grants Program for review and approval. Once the National Cemetery Grants Program gives us authorization to proceed we will begin the process of designing the architectural features of the cemetery buildings. Keep informed by visiting the WDVA Eastern WA Cemetery web page at [http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern\\_wa\\_vet\\_cemetery.html](http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern_wa_vet_cemetery.html)

### **JANUARY 2008**

#### **STATE VETERANS CEMETERY**

On January 9, the Cemetery Design Committee (formed in Oct. 2007) held a public meeting at which Architect and Engineering Firm, JGM, presented their site analysis for the future State Veterans Cemetery. The Committee is now developing input on what features and ideas they would like incorporated in the design.

JGM will prepare three design alternatives that will be presented to the Committee at the February 13 Design Committee meeting. The alternatives will then be finalized and incorporated into the Cemetery Master Plan that will be presented to the Federal VA State Construction Grant Program in April.

[http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern\\_wa\\_vet\\_cemetery.html](http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern_wa_vet_cemetery.html)

### **NOVEMBER 2007**

#### **STATE BOARD OF NATURAL RESOURCES APPROVES TRANSFER OF LAND FOR VETERANS' CEMETERY**

On November 6, the Board approved a direct transfer of 80 acres of Common School Trust land to the WDVA to establish a cemetery near Spokane. "The Board's approval of this transfer means there can soon be a final burial place for military veterans in Eastern Washington," said Washington State Commissioner of Public Lands Doug Sutherland.

### **OCTOBER 2007**

#### **STATE VETERANS CEMETERY**

WDVA Cemetery Administrator Rich Cesler and JGM Landscape Architects, Inc. will hold an initial meeting with interested community members to provide an overview of the cemetery design process and to solicit input.

The meeting will be held October 17, 2007, from 10am – 12pm at VFW Post 51.

VFW Post 51

300 W Mission Ave

Spokane WA 99201

For more information, contact Rich Cesler at: [richardc@dva.wa.gov](mailto:richardc@dva.wa.gov) or 509-565-5040.

### **SEPTEMBER 2007**

#### **EASTERN WASHINGTON CEMETERY**

I am proud to announce the selection of Richard H. Cesler, Sr. as the Veterans Cemetery Administrator for the Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery.

Cesler served in the U.S. Air Force from 1966-1970, obtained the rank of Sergeant, and was honorably discharged as a disabled Vietnam Veteran.

Since 2005, Cesler has served as the Director of the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery, overseeing all operations at the 76.5 acre facility where more than 1,200 internments have occurred since opening in 2004.

We have also selected design firm, JGM Landscape Architects Inc, to develop the cemetery design which must be submitted to the Federal VA for funding approval. JGM Landscape Architects Inc also designed the Tahoma National Cemetery in Western Washington and the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery and is committed to working closely with the Eastern Washington Veterans Community throughout the design process.

Congratulations to both Richard Cesler and JGM Landscape Architects Inc!

[http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern\\_wa\\_vet\\_cemetery.html](http://www.dva.wa.gov/eastern_wa_vet_cemetery.html)

## **AUGUST 2007**

### **EASTERN WASHINGTON CEMETERY**

Interviews for the Cemetery Administrator position were conducted on July 31. A final candidate has been selected and will be announced pending reference checks.

Once the administrator is on-site, we will begin the process of selecting a design firm. Throughout this process, we will work closely with members of the community to ensure the cemetery design meets the needs of Eastern Washington Veterans Community.

## **JUNE 2007**

### **CEMETERY UPDATE**

The State Veterans Cemetery Administrator Position Announcement is available now at: [www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov) (click on WDVA Jobs).

The Cemetery Administrator will be responsible for securing local administrative, financial, and other resources and staff, and developing and implementing management policies. In addition, the Administrator has the overall responsibility for planning, coordinating, and directing the administration and operation of the State Veterans cemetery.

## **MAY 2007**

### **CEMETERY UPDATE**

Our thanks goes to our Governor, State Senators and State Representatives who approved the Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery budget and House Bill 1292, authorizing WDVA to establish the cemetery.

With the passage of the budget and the legislation, we can also finalize the Pre-Application to the Federal VA State Cemetery Grants Program.

In addition, the state budget allows WDVA to recruit for and hire a Cemetery Director in July of 2007. This announcement will be posted to the WDVA web site as soon as it is available: [www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov) (click on WDVA Jobs).

## **FEBRUARY, 2007**

### **EASTERN WA STATE VETERANS CEMETERY**

On January 25, 2007, First Gentleman Mike Gregoire and I held a media availability and spoke with 30 Spokane-area Veteran Leaders about the progress being made on the Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery project.

The good news is that Governor Gregoire included all necessary funding for the cemetery in her 2007 budget proposal. The budget proposal and legislation establishing the cemetery is currently being considered by the Washington State House of Representatives and Senate.

## **JANUARY, 2007**

### **STATE LEGISLATURE CONVENES**

The 2007 Legislative Session began on January 8 and already there are two dozen bills focused on veterans issues!

WDVA is answering questions from Legislators on the agency's budget requests.

WDVA also requested legislation to establish the Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery and provided testimony on the Senate version of the bill (Senate Bill 5058) in the Government Operations and Elections Committee on January 16. A hearing will be held on the House Bill (HB 1292) in the State Government and Tribal Affairs Committee during the week of January 22.

For information on the veteran bills being watched by WDVA, visit: [www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov) and click on 'Legislative Updates'.

## **APRIL, 2006**

### **Eastern Washington Cemetery Update April 2006**

During the 2006 Legislative Session, WDVA requested \$500,000 in state funding to begin the design for the Eastern Washington Veterans Cemetery. This request was supported in the Governor's budget proposal; however, rather than funding the design in the 2006 Supplemental Budget, the Legislature requested a formal business plan for the cemetery and a more detailed evaluation of the sites. The Capital Budget language is below:

The department shall develop a business plan for a state operated veterans' cemetery located in eastern Washington. The department shall submit the business plan to the legislature and the office of financial management by September 1, 2006. The business plan must include, but not be limited to the following:

- (1) A 10-year financial plan including:
    - (a) Capital investment costs including a schedule for design and construction;
    - (b) Biennial operating costs; and
    - (c) Forecasted revenues including license plate sales, veterans administration plot allowances, endowments, and grants.
  - (2) An assessment of cemetery needs for veterans and veterans' families in eastern Washington.
  - (3) An evaluation of potential sites for the cemetery that would be within a reasonable distance of the majority of veterans' families.
- The department shall work closely with the department of natural resources to determine potential sites.
- (4) An analysis of lands that are currently owned by the department that could be sold in exchange for land for a cemetery in eastern Washington.

#### ***Next Steps:***

WDVA is continuing the site evaluation in order to determine which site will be chosen. In March several WDVA staff members met with Department of Natural Resources Regional employees evaluating various potential sites for the cemetery. They narrowed the number of potential sites to two. In April, I met with First Gentleman Mike Gregoire and Don Gillespie, a WDVA staff member, and toured the two potential sites along with staff members from the Department of Natural Resources. We will continue working with the Department of Natural Resources on the purchase of the most appropriate site.

#### ***More Information:***

For more information, please contact Jerry Towne at 360-725-2159

## **MARCH, 2006**

### **Legislative Review**

The 2006 Legislature adjourned one day early on March 8, using 59 of the 60 days allowed for the regular session.

Several new laws were passed this year that will help veterans with access to tuition waivers, become homeowners, provide emergency cash assistance to recently returned veterans, and ensure our overseas military voters have time to vote.

A list of the bills that passed is below:

- SHB 2233 – Tuition waiver for veterans**
- SHB 2471 – Veteran homeownership**
- SHB 2497 – National Guard**
- 2SHB 2754 – Veterans innovations program**
- EHB 3074 – Military status/defendants**
- ESH 6236 – Election dates & deadlines**
- SB 6766 – National Guard Scholarship**

Supplemental Budgets were also approved by the House and Senate. For WDVA the budget included the following:

**Operating Budget**

- \$1.5 million to open the last 40 bed wing at the Veterans Home;
- \$500,000 to serve more National Guard Returnees through Family Activity Days and to provide additional mental health counseling.
- \$100,000 to assist veterans through the Veterans Conservation Corps.
- \$2 million to implement 2SHB 2754, the Veterans Innovations Program, providing emergency assistance to veterans returning from deployments.
- \$82,000 to pay for the increased utility costs at the Veterans Homes.
- Smart Buy Initiative – the Office of Financial Management is calculating how to spread each agency's share of projected savings through Smart Buy.

**Capital Budget**

- \$170,000 (and the authority to request \$318,000 in matching funds from the federal VA) to remodel building 9 at Retsil so veterans can be served through transitional programs; and
- **Instructions to develop a 10 year business plan for the State Veterans Cemetery in eastern Washington.**

For a printable summary of veterans legislation please visit: [www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov) .

**JANUARY, 2006**

**Budget Update:** The 2006 Legislative Session began on January 9. Although this is only a 60 day session, and a non-biennial budget writing year, many proposals have been introduced.

Governor Gregoire approved funding for each of the programs listed below in our 2006 Supplemental Budget request. Next, the House and Senate must consider the budget proposals and vote on a final budget bill.

For WDVA, this could mean:

- \$1.5 million to open the last 40 bed wing at the Veterans Home;
- \$500,000 to serve more National Guard Returnees through Family Activity Days and to provide additional mental health counseling.
- \$500,000 to design a new Eastern Washington State Veterans Cemetery; and
- \$170,000 to remodel building 9 at Retsil so veterans can be served through transitional programs.
- \$82,000 to pay for the increased utility costs at the Veterans Homes.

To find out more about other veterans bills introduced in the Legislature, visit our Legislative Updates page at: [www.dva.wa.gov](http://www.dva.wa.gov) .