

UNITED VETERANS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF MINNESOTA

Veterans Service Building

2nd Floor • 20 West 12th Street • St. Paul, MN 55155-2079



Army



Air Force



Marine Corps



Coast Guard



Merchant Marines



Navy

“A Consortium of Veterans, Military, and Auxiliary Organizations to exchange information and support Issues relating to entitlements for Veterans, Military Retirees, the National Guard and Military Reservists, their dependents and survivors.”

UVLC Website – www.mnuvlc.org

UVLC Minutes – Wednesday, February 4, 2009

- Call to order – 09:30
- Invocation – Jerry Kyser
- Pledge of Allegiance - Howard Wilson
- Recognition of visitors and guests and Commander’s of VSO’s
- Reports from: Chairman, Jerry Kyser-Dept of Vet Affairs has heightened awareness by doing a symposium on depleted uranium. There will be a video of the meeting on line for observation. Vice Chairman, Ralph Donais –asked that the Email Programs that assist MN Soldiers and Families from the MN Army Reserve Ambassadors be put on the MNDVA website. Deputy Commissioner Mike Pugliese was to check it out.
 1. State Agencies and MN Veteran Assistance Organizations
 - MN Dept of Veteran Affairs-Deputy Commissioner – Mike Pugliese -Governor announced the following as recommendation for veteran affairs as funding requests: \$440,000 for the Hastings Mental Health Professional; 1.960M for technology upgrades; 2.5M for betterment of the homes; 5.2M for veteran homes; 2.100M Campus Reps funding and Sunset date Repeal. The governor is recommending a repeal of the June 30, 2011 sunset date for the Higher Education Veterans Assistance Program. This change will affect the funding for Fiscal Years 2012-13 by requesting an additional 1.050M in each year. The recommendation for the repeal of the sunset date will allow the department to keep the program operating at an efficient, high quality level.
 - MN Military Affairs – COL Eric Ahlness: Deployment update: 133rd & 148th have returned safely from Iraq within the last month. 780 are expected to return by the end of the school year. It is common that people are going on their second deployment. Yellow ribbon reintegration is more aggressive. It is a grass roots movement for many communities. Campus reps are vital. 75% returning veterans go back to school. Campus reps provide the venue to encourage the benefits. This is the best year ever for the National Guard. 121% recruitment in the Army guard. The MN Air Guard is at 110%. Links with the community are being made through the “Warrior to Citizen Effort.” The Departure Ceremony for the 34th Red Bull Infantry Division is being held at the River Centre Complex 4:00 to 9:00 pm on the Tues 10th of February. They will be serving 8,000 steak dinners (4500 lbs of Beef Steak). Chairman Kyser was invited to attend the reception and dinner to represent the UVLC along with former Chairman Sid Schmuckler.- (Update 2-11-09) The Reception and Ceremony was wonderful with many Veterans Org, Military, Civic, State, Legislative Leaders and Governor with his wife in attendance. Governor Pawlenty was still there when I left at 9:00PM talking and taking pictures with the Soldiers and their families. He a great supporter of all of Minnesota’s Military, Veterans and their Families.

- **MN Assistance Council for Veterans (MACV)- Kathy Vitalis / Kara Cornils)**
S.F. 288 Erickson Ropes: Minnesota Assistance Council for veterans continues outreach to homeless veterans and family grant appropriation. This will be heard on Thursday, February 5, at 3:00-5:30 in Senate room #107. There has been a 58% increase in the number of veterans that have been seen. Standdown update: In process of trying to keep this at Fort Snelling. Served 870 vets and families. 35% are Vietnam Veterans. 8-10% are female veterans. Federal congressional support has been good. Go to the email site statelegislation.org to track what bills are conducting hearings.
- **MN Veterans Initiatives Center and Research Institute – Jack Scharrett - The Institute is located in building 11 on the VA Campus. Veterans come back to this country with the ability to do incredible things. VICTRI is set up to start businesses for the veteran leaders. This is a one of a kind in the country operation to help veterans reintegrate to be successful leaders in their communities. Since Dec the website was launched, made the seed capital goals. Veterans hire veterans. They call themselves a force multiplier in business. Met with the commander’s Task force to ask for capital support.**
www.victri.org

2. Federal Agencies

- **VA Regional Office –Julie Carie, Office of Director - Jeff Alger has retired. Acting Director is Loren Miller from Lincoln Nebraska. Hired 30 new VCR’s last week and 32 more next week. A new director has been hired. Dr Carol Fillman from Seattle has spent much of her career in VHA. She will be on station March 1, 2009.**
- **VISN 23 – Cynthia Breyfogle – Deputy Director-Guest Micheal Muhleisen is a program analyst, office of IT oversight and compliance is in town with a team from Washington DC. This team evaluates the compliance of all of the private data of all veterans. A handout was distributed that outlines the following topics: General Eric Shinseki was sworn in as Nation’s 7th Sec of Veterans Affairs. Gould nominated for Deputy Sec of Vet Affairs. Duckworth tapped for VA Assistant Secretary. Budget Update. Rural Health Planning. There is a proposed settlement reached in lawsuit over risk of potential identify theft.**
- **Mpls VA Medical Center- Mike Rosecrans- Friday Feb 13th National Salute to Hospitalized Vets Day. Meet at 9:30 AM at the Mpls VA Flagg Atrium.**
- **St Cloud VA Medical Center – Director or Rose Blessner- Lots of construction going on in St Cloud. New physicians have been added to the staff. Brainerd will be moving to a new location. This should improve access to care.**
- **Vets Employment & Training Service [VETS] – Jodi Bean- May 27th is the Veterans Job fair at Earl Brown Center in Brooklyn Center, MN.**

2. Federal Congressional Senators and Representatives

- **Senator Amy Klobuchar –Kelly Scanlan introduced Greg Swanholm, Constituent Advocate, who is taking over for Martin while he is deployed. Greg has been with the Senator working with SS and will be taking over the veterans claims.**
- **7th District Representative - Collin Peterson- Al Loehr-Issues were brought forward: advanced funding for med centers, disability compensation program, new GI bill, 36 organizational representatives discussed these issues that concern all veterans. Ready to move forward in the 111th Congress. GI bill shows a proportional service requirement; there may be a transferability to go to a family member.**

- 1st District Representative –Tim Walz - John Pierce-Training in Washington DC. Concerning the GI bill. #1 priority is seamless transition. VA budget with VSO's. There will be a yellow ribbon ceremony in Rochester. 5 out of the 7 candidates have received appointments to the military academies.
- 2nd District Representative – John Kline - Chaz Johnson-Parody for Patriot's bill and Stolen Valor Act are two of the co-sponsored bills. Farmington is in the lead for the Warrior to Citizen Program.
- 3rd District Representative –Welcome to John-Paul Yates-District Outreach Coordinator. Margaret Cavanaugh will come for her award in March.
- 4th District Representative- Betty McCollum- Constance Haddeland is a constituent service representative who will be working veteran issues.
- 6th District Representative- Michele Bachmann - Jack Tomczak- One candidate going to the Naval Academy.
- 8th District Representative – James Oberstar- Melissa Jabas-Meeting was held in Brainerd with over 200 Veterans to talk about the veteran needs in the community

3. Announcements – Chairman – We would like to have house and senate representatives to attend our meeting to communicate our involvement.

1. Meeting in Recess for 10 minutes

2. Old Business – General business: The UVLC is in support of the following legislative ideas.

- Economic Development Program or Workforce Development
- New hiring preference for Veteran for State jobs only
- Mandatory 3% use of service disabled veteran owned business in state contracts
- Veterans Paramedic apprenticeship Program
- Include military widows of Veterans in the prop tax reduction to the same as the 70%-100% disabled Veteran.

990N Non Profit report to IRS- Registration is in process by April 09.

Treasurer Report: \$3,584.48 in the checking account. \$79.00 was expensed for stamps and copy cartridge. \$450 was collected for dues.

3. New Business – Discuss a Budget for 2009 to be presented in March.

4. The UVLC approves support by a majority rule.

A motion was made and seconded to support what the Commanders Task Force has stated as their endorsements. Letters will be sent to Legislators.

Bob Smith reported that he attended a two hour hearing that gave very important information and wanted to pass on the encouragement to attend as many hearings as possible.

Military retirees should now be referred to as “Second Career Military.”

You can receive information about the weekly sessions by calling 651-296-2146

There were 51 people in attendance. **PLEASE PAY YOUR 2009 DUES.**

Adjournment/ Next Meeting 9:30 AM, Wed, March 4, 2009 at Building 9 Auditorium on the Mlps VA Medical Center Campus – Attached to VISN 23 Building