



Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs

Biennial Report 2009-2011



Scott Walker, Governor

John A. Scocos, Secretary

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**STATE OF WISCONSIN
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS**

October 14, 2011

Scott Walker, Governor
State of Wisconsin
115 E State Capitol
Madison, WI 53703

Dear Governor Walker:

Wisconsin Act 36 restructured the administration of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs to provide that the head of the agency is now the Secretary instead of the Board of Veterans Affairs. In addition, it elevated the Department to a cabinet level agency whose Secretary is appointed by the Governor. You will notice the organizational chart and the agency description contained herein are outdated due to changes made by Act 36. The Act was published into law on July 27th and the end date for the information covered in this report was June 30th. For the sake of consistency, we kept the WDVA organizational structure and description in effect as of June 30th.

I am extremely proud to be the first ever cabinet level appointed Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and look forward to my team and I being able to utilize the new tools available to the Secretary's office to ensure the critical needs of Wisconsin's veterans and their dependents are met now and into the future. In pursuit of our mission, it is important to identify priorities so the Department can focus our efforts. Those three priorities are jobs, solvency and modernizing our outreach efforts to assist the 21st Century veteran. In order to provide the best possible service to our men and women who have served in uniform, these areas need to be addressed first and foremost. If a veteran is unemployed, we need to help him or her find a job; if in need of certain benefits, we need the program money to make sure they are taken care of. And, of course, in order to assist them with receiving the rightful benefits and help they need, we must find them. In order to accomplish these missions, we need to work hand in hand with key stakeholders, advocates, non-profits and veterans service organizations in a non-partisan and fiscally responsible manner.

Moving forward we will be taking a re-look at every program we administer, review all expenses we incur, and apply intense scrutiny to every decision we make. Through this process we will be able to find savings, improve efficiency, and eliminate waste which will ultimately serve our veterans better and help ease the burden on our state's strained budget.

Our vision is to improve our veterans' lives by focusing our efforts on being excellent in a few strategically pin-point areas, rather than just be average at everything. When we achieve this vision, I am confident the drastically improved way services are delivered will be recognized by other agencies, the Governor's office, and the state legislature in such a way that it will become a model for the nation.

Thank you,
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John A. Scocos".

JOHN A. SCOCOS
Secretary



Table of Contents

AGENCY OVERVIEW	1
WDVA ORGANIZATION	2
WDVA INTERNAL STRUCTURE AND DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT	4
WDVA ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR THE 09-11 BIENNIUM.....	6
WDVA MAJOR INITIATIVES FOR 2011-13 BIENNIUM.....	7
WDVA DIVISION SUMMARIES.....	8
WDVA DIVISION OF ADMINISTRATION	9
WDVA DIVISION OF VETERANS BENEFITS AND SERVICES.....	12
WDVA DIVISION OF VETERANS HOMES.....	20
THE WISCONSIN VETERANS MUSEUM	25

OVERVIEW

Wisconsin has earned a distinguished reputation nationally for instituting programs and services that meet the needs of its residents who served in the U.S. armed forces and their families. The state's proud tradition of providing assistance to veterans and their families began soon after the Civil War. Most of this early assistance was intended to alleviate the suffering of destitute veterans and their families.

In 1887, the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR), a prominent organization representing Civil War veterans, founded the Grand Army Home at King. This facility near Waupaca was eventually turned over to the State of Wisconsin and became the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. In August 2001, the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove opened and in June 2011, the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs broke ground for a new Veterans Home in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. Each of the veterans homes offers high quality skilled nursing care and retirement options for veterans and their spouses.



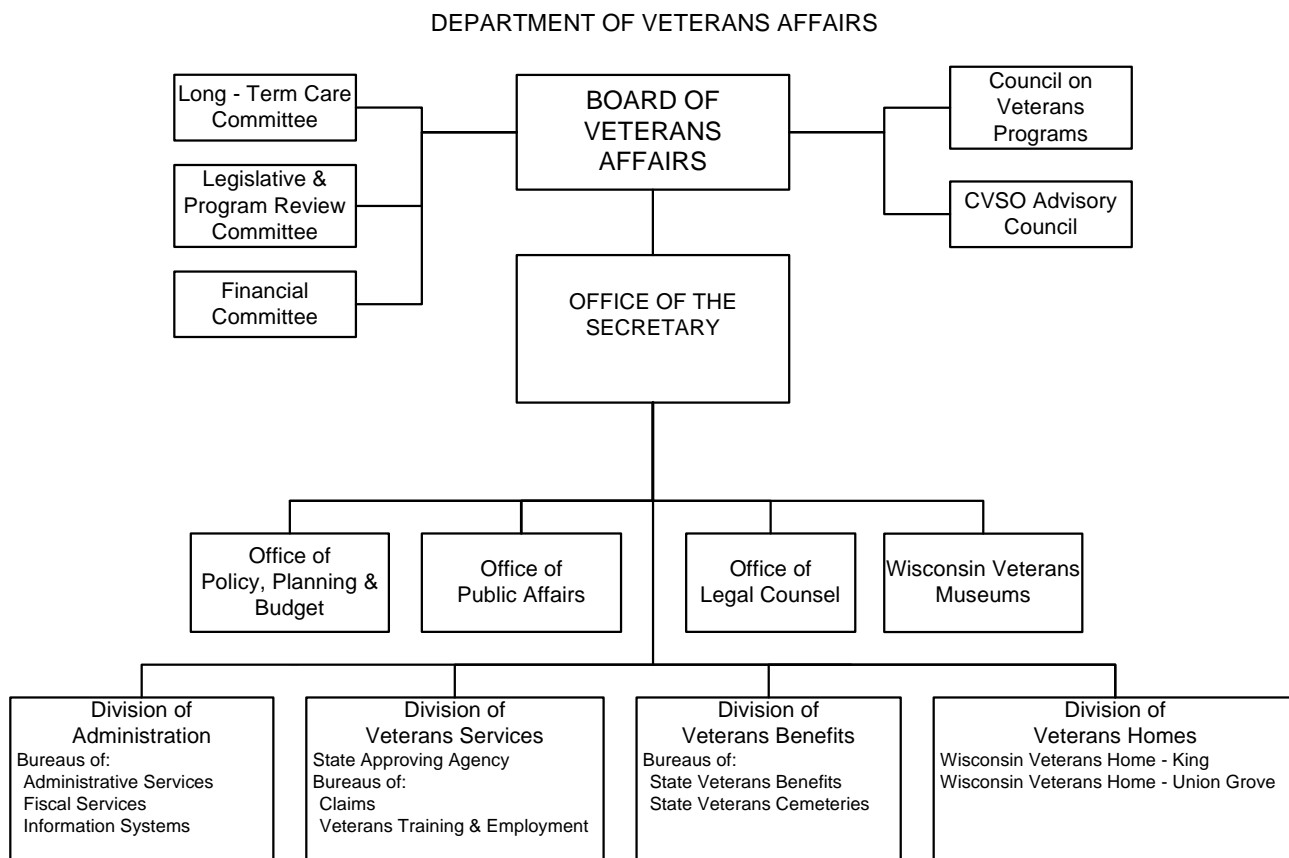
In 1901, the state honored Civil War veterans by establishing a GAR headquarters and museum in the State Capitol. In 1989, the Legislature authorized the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs to build a new museum, honoring veterans from all wars, across the street from the Capitol. The award-winning Wisconsin Veterans Museum opened in 1993.

In 1919, the state issued its only wartime bonus to Wisconsin veterans of World War I. In 1945, rather than issue a wartime bonus with little lasting value, the Legislature created programs that offered long-term benefits for state veterans and their families.

To administer state veterans programs, the Legislature created the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) in 1945. The department was given the administrative responsibility for the Grand Army Home at King, the GAR Memorial Hall in the Capitol, the state's economic and education assistance benefits for veterans, and other programs. It also assumed responsibility for segregated funds for veterans that were combined in 1961 to form the Veterans Trust Fund.

Today, WDVA provides an array of benefits and services to eligible state veterans and in some instances, veterans' family members. To deliver these benefits and services, WDVA works closely with county veterans service officers (CVSOs), Tribal veterans service officers (TVSOs), state veterans service organizations (VSOs), the University of Wisconsin System, Wisconsin Technical College System, Office of the State Public Defender (OPD), Wisconsin Department of Revenue, and the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA).

WDVA Organization—June 2011



AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The department was created by Chapter 580, Laws of 1945, to ensure that the state's veterans receive the state benefits to which they are entitled and to assist them in securing their federal veterans benefits. The department is headed by a seven-member Board appointed by the Governor and administered by a Secretary appointment by the Board. Programs included in the department's mission are the: Wisconsin Veterans Homes, Veterans Assistance Program, veterans Home Loan Program, Wisconsin Veterans Memorial cemeteries, Veterans Administration Regional Claims Office, Military Funeral Honors Program and Wisconsin Veterans Museum. For the most part, these programs are designed to provide health, educational assistance, economic assistance and other services to specified veterans of the armed forces of the United States.

MISSION

The mission of the department is to work on behalf of Wisconsin's veterans community—veterans, their families and their survivors—in recognition of their service and sacrifice to our state and nation.

The department's vision is to expand Wisconsin's role as a dynamic leaders in providing exceptional service to veterans throughout their lifetime and beyond.

WDVA Organization—June 2011

BOARD OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

WDVA is governed by a seven-member board, which appoints the Department's Secretary. The Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate, appoints the Board members, all of whom are veterans, to six-year terms. Members of the Board during the 2009–2011 biennium were:

- Daniel Naylor of Waupaca (Appointed 01/08 to 05/13)
- Marvin J. Freedman of Middleton (Appointed 08/09 to 05/15)
- Benjamin Collins of Lake Geneva (Appointed 05/11 to 05/17)
- Alan Richards of Grafton (Appointed 05/11 to 05/13)
- John Townsend of Fond du Lac (Appointed 06/11 to 05/13)
- John M. Gaedke of Merrimac (Appointed 05/11 to 05/17)
- Peter J. Moran of Superior (Appointed 08/09 resigned 08/11)
- David Boetcher of Waunakee (Appointed 08/09 to 05/11)
- Rodney C. Moen of Whitehall (Appointed 06/05 to 05/11)
- Jacqueline A. Guthrie of Sun Prairie (Appointed 05/07 resigned 06/10)
- Marcia Anderson of Verona (Appointed 09/07 resigned 09/10)

The Board receives recommendations from its committees:

- The Legislative & Program Review Committee (composed of state veterans)
- The Long-Term Care Committee (composed of state veterans)
- The Finance Committee (composed of state veterans)
- The CVSO Advisory Committee (composed of county veterans service officers)

The Board also receives recommendations from one statutory council:

- The Council on Veterans Programs (composed of representatives from veterans' organizations specified in state statutes)

2011-2013 Changes to Board Composition and Function

On July 13, 2011, Governor Scott Walker signed Assembly Bill 96 into law as 2011 Wisconsin Act 36, which became effective after the close of the 2009-2011 biennium, changed the composition and role of the Board of Veterans Affairs, the appointment of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and the supervision of the Department of Veterans Affairs. In its new role, the nine-member, part-time, citizen Board of Veterans Affairs will provide advice to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Board members are required to be veterans who meet the requirements of s.45.01 (12), Stats., and for each of Wisconsin's eight congressional districts, there must be at least one member of the Board who is a resident of that district. Board members are appointed by the Governor for four-year terms with the advice and consent of the Wisconsin State Senate. Board members' four-year terms are staggered, helping to ensure continuity, and expire on May 1st in odd-numbered years. Each Board member is required by law to take and file an official oath prior to assuming office.

The Board is required to meet annually, and may meet at other times. At its first meeting in each year, the Board elects a chairperson, vice chairperson, and Board secretary as officers of the Board. Officers can be reelected for successive terms.

Internal Structure and Department Management

Board members receive no compensation for their services, though they are able to receive reimbursement of actual and necessary expenses required in the performance of their duties.

The Secretary of the Department, after consulting with the Board, may promulgate rules necessary to carry out the duties of the Department of Veterans Affairs. The Secretary shall provide the Board with a copy of any rule that the Department is preparing and the Board may prepare a report containing written comments and its opinion regarding the proposed rule. In preparing the proposed rule the Department will include with its analysis any written comments and opinions of the Board.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

The Office of the Secretary oversees the daily operations of the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA), which conducts a variety of State level veterans related programs and services while providing assistance for Federal veterans benefits. WDVA has responsibility for the States veterans programs, ensuring eligibility for two veterans programs administered by other State agencies, the operation of two State Veterans Homes providing long term nursing care in an environment ensuring dignity and respect; four Homeless Veterans sites, three State Veterans Cemeteries, a Home Loan program, a Veterans Claims assistance center and many other programs and services for our State's veterans. On March 1, 2011, the department underwent a reorganization to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of service delivery of state veterans benefits to Wisconsin veterans.

The office of the Secretary includes:

Secretary

Appointed by the seven-member Board of Veterans Affairs, the Secretary works closely with the Governor's office, other heads of Wisconsin State Agencies, the regional directors of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and state and federal legislators to ensure the Department's overall mission and goals provide value to the veterans living in the State of Wisconsin

2011 Wisconsin Act 36, which became effective after the close of the 2009-2011 biennium, changed the composition of the Board of Veterans Affairs, the appointment of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs and the supervision of the Department of Veterans Affairs. In accordance with that Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs is nominated by the Governor after consulting with the presiding officers of at least six Wisconsin veterans organizations and must be confirmed by the State Senate.

Deputy Secretary

The Deputy Secretary serves a surrogate for the Secretary and is responsible for the day-to-day internal operations of the department, including the department's budget, resolution of all critical issues and oversight of major contracts.

Executive Assistant

The Executive Assistant serves the Secretary and is the primary contact for inter-governmental agency functions. The Executive Assistant also serves as the agency legislative liaison.

Internal Structure and Department Management

Office of Legal Counsel

The Office of Legal Counsel (OLC) provides legal advice to the department's program managers, agency staff, the Council on Veterans Programs and the Wisconsin Board of Veterans Affairs; supervises internal litigation matters (program/service denial appeals); supervises external litigation matters on behalf of the agency (Bankruptcy filings, personnel appeals, and others); and coordinates external litigation handled on behalf of WDVA by the Department of Justice. OLC also coordinates WDVA's rulemaking activities.

Office of Policy, Planning and Budget

The Office of Policy, Planning and Budget (OPPB) develops, monitors and manages the department's annual and biennial capital and operating budgets; provides financial, policy and statistical analysis of department programs; coordinates risk assessment, internal control development and internal audit services; and maintains effective working relationships with the State Budget Office, Legislative Fiscal Bureau and United States Department of Veterans Affairs officials. OPPB also coordinates collection and analysis of demographic data concerning Wisconsin veterans; Department-wide planning and development of internal policies, administrative procedures and business improvement projects; and implementation of strategic planning.

Office of Public Affairs

The Office of Public Affairs (OPA) ensures the department responds to requests for information from the news media and the public in an accurate, timely, and comprehensive fashion. The office disseminates information by working with each of the divisions to publicize the many programs, innovations, achievements, and issues for WDVA; is involved with event planning and coordination, including marketing campaigns; and oversees all general content on the department website. The office is also responsible for advising the Secretary and Executive Staff about communications strategies for the department and interactions with partners in the veterans community, state government, and federal, state and local entities.

WDVA Accomplishments for 09-11 Biennium

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR WISCONSIN VETERANS

The Department's accomplishments during the 2009 - 11 biennium were many. Of particular note, the Department:

- Developed a strategic plan that identifies the mission and vision of the organization, the goals and objectives in support thereof, and the core values of dedication, respect, compassion, integrity, accountability, efficiency, innovation, and responsiveness the Department strives to embody.
- Developed a reorganization plan that strengthens financial oversight of Wisconsin Veterans Homes through centralization in key areas; eliminates duplication of staff and services; uses existing personnel resources to accomplish strategic goals and objectives; reduces the number of manager and supervisor positions and consolidates the organizational structure; repurposes Gates Hall at the Union Grove Veterans Home from a residential care apartment complex to a licensed, skilled nursing facility to provide services for which there is strong demand and institute a business model that will successfully balance revenues and expenditures; provides estimated cost savings of \$1.4 million in salaries and benefits; and is consistent with findings of the Operational Assessment Report prepared for the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs by Pathway Health Services, Inc., USDVA National Cemetery Association shrine standards, and Legislative Audit Bureau evaluation recommendations.
- Prepared and presented to the Board of Veterans Affairs a new "Skilled Nursing Demand Analysis for Wisconsin's Veterans Homes".
- Completed studies evaluating revenue enhancement opportunities for the Veterans Homes, including one titled, "Medicare Certification for the King Veterans Home: A Cost-Benefit Analysis" and another titled, "Feasibility of Assisted Living Members Receiving Support Through Family Care".
- Prepared a Five-Year Business Plan for Skilled Nursing Care for the proposed Chippewa Falls Veterans Home, which demonstrated cash flows for the Home would be sufficient to recover start up costs and produce a positive net income by year five.
- Was awarded twelve USDVA State Home Construction Grants totaling \$22,957,459 for up to 65% of the \$35,319,167 cost of Veterans Homes construction projects, including an award of \$12,406,940 for the construction of the Chippewa Falls Veterans Home.
- Broke ground for the Chippewa Falls Veterans Home Skilled Nursing Facility, which was marked by a formal groundbreaking ceremony on June 24, 2011.
- Was awarded a \$5,281,675 USDVA construction grant for improvements at the Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery including a new committal shelter, additional burial gardens and four new columbaria.
- Was presented with National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Excellence of Appearance Awards for maintaining the cemetery grounds in an exceptional manner for the families and visitors of the Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery and Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery, an honor achieved by only one of seventy-four (74) state veterans cemeteries nationally.
- Implemented a quarterly budget review process to provide a systematic approach for comparing projected expenditures to available budget authority for all Department programs, together with a formal reporting schedule to discuss the results of the same with executive management.
- Utilized the auditor position requested and authorized as part of the 2009-11 biennial budget to develop and implement a risk assessment policy and program that integrates risk assessment practices in decision-making, including proper accountability; evaluation; performance monitoring and reporting; and improvement of planning and practices.
- Exercised extraordinary and optional redemption provisions nine times to call \$108,090,000 of general obligation bonds prior to their scheduled maturity to reduce negative arbitrage resulting from historically low State Investment Fund earnings rates.
- Received an additional \$68,900 GPR for increased appropriations for military funeral honors stipends

Major Initiatives for 2011-13 Biennium

to local veterans service organizations as part of 2011 Wisconsin Act 27.

- Supported a variety of legislation that sought to improve veterans' benefits and services or access thereto.
- Began publication of the Veterans Legislation Monthly Update to notify veterans advocates on relevant legislative developments.
- Formed the 12-member, volunteer Civil War Sesquicentennial Commission to honor the legacy, service and sacrifice of the state's citizen-soldiers who fought in the Union Army.
- Successfully advocated for the creation of a new Chapter 20 program for the Wisconsin Veterans Museum and an exemption from the nursing home bed assessment for the Wisconsin Veterans Homes as part of the 2011-13 biennial budget, 2011 Wisconsin Act 32.

MAJOR INITIATIVES FOR 2011-13 BIENNIUM

During the 2011-13 biennium, the Department will:

- Reorganize to meet the Secretary's goals to: ensure the long-term solvency of the Veterans Trust Fund, Mortgage Loan Repayment Fund and Veterans Homes; create the right blend of outreach that reflects the needs of veterans in the 21st Century; and reduce veterans unemployment through collaboration with the Governor's Office, State Legislature, sister agencies and the USDVA. Relocate to a new building to generate lease savings for the benefit of Veterans Trust Fund, Mortgage Loan Repayment Fund and Veterans Homes.
- Develop a long-term facility investment plan for the Veterans Homes based on the "Skilled Nursing Demand Analysis for Wisconsin's Veterans Homes".
- Develop comprehensive, five-year business plans for the Veterans Homes at King and Union Grove.
- Prepare a cost-benefit analysis prior to contracting with a private entity for the operation and staffing of the Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls and submit the analysis to the Department of Administration.
- Deliver skilled nursing services to veterans in northwestern Wisconsin by opening the Chippewa Falls Veterans Home Skilled Nursing Facility no later than November 1, 2012.
- Continue development of amendments to Ch. VA 6, Wis. Adm. Code, to include a formula for calculating private pay rates for nursing home and assisted living care at the Wisconsin Veterans Homes.
- Promulgate administrative rules for the Aid to Indigent Veterans program that clearly define asset requirements for resident eligibility, including policies on divestment.
- Annually complete a risk assessment and develop risk mitigation plans, as appropriate.
- Implement a formal internal audit policy.
- Jointly with the Board of Veterans Affairs provide recommendations regarding the adoption of viable long-term funding sources for the Veterans Trust Fund and submit the same to the Governor, the Chief Clerk of each house of the Legislature and the Co-Chairpersons of the Joint Committee on Finance by June 30, 2012, in accordance with the non-statutory provisions of 2011 Wisconsin Act 32.

Division Summaries

Division of Administration

The Division of Administration provides management and program support to all of the Department's operating units. Division services include finance, human resources, risk management, payroll and benefits, employment relations, records management, open records administration, facilities management, building and safety, purchasing and fleet management, Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) and information technology.

Division of Veterans Benefits and Services

The Divisions of Veterans Benefits and Veterans Services administer an array of benefits, programs and services to eligible state veterans in order to supplement and complement those provided to veterans by the federal government. These benefits, programs, and services assist Wisconsin veterans by enhancing their education and employment; purchasing or improving a home; traveling to federal VA medical appointments; obtaining needed health care services not provided by the USDVA; overcoming barriers to employment including homelessness; and obtaining discharge upgrades, lost or never issued medals, and subsistence assistance in emergency situations, among others.

Division of Veterans Homes

The Division of Veterans Homes provides long-term care services to veterans and their eligible spouses and dependents at the Wisconsin Veterans Homes located in King and Union Grove, Wisconsin. A third Veterans Home is under construction in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin.

The Veterans Home at King provides skilled nursing services for up to 721 veterans. The Veterans Home at Union Grove provides skilled nursing services for up to 120 veterans and is licensed to serve up to 123 veterans at the assisted living level of care. The Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls, which is projected to open by November 2012, will provide skilled nursing services for up to 72 veterans.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum

The Wisconsin Veterans Museum (WVM) employs exhibits, displays and presentations to tell the stories of men and women from Wisconsin who served in America's conflicts from the Civil War to today's Global War on Terrorism. The WVM, accredited by the American Association of Museums, contains 10,000 square feet of displays at the capitol square location and has operational and administrative authority over the Wisconsin National Guard Museum located at Volk Field near Camp Douglas, Wisconsin, and the permanent exhibit located in the Marden Center at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King.

Division of Administration

Division Description

The Division of Administration is a service division consisting of 52.1 staff whose responsibility is to provide a wide variety of customer-focused, central support services to the Office of the Secretary, DVA programs, staff and partner agencies. The Division is organized into the Bureaus of Administrative Services, Fiscal Services and Information Services.

Services provided by the Division include:

- Human resource management
- Payroll and benefits administration
- Health, safety and risk management services
- Financial Management
- Purchasing
- Mail, fleet and asset management
- Facilities management
- Information technology, imaging and telecommunication services
- Central coordination of department administrative processes and policies
- Continuity of operations planning
- Veterans' eligibility determinations

Bureau of Administrative Services

The mission of the Bureau of Administrative Services is to ensure the recruitment and retention of the best possible staff to provide benefits and services to Wisconsin veterans. The Bureau ensures that the Department establishes and administers human resources and payroll policies and processes consistently, equitably and in compliance with applicable state and federal regulations to maintain a productive workforce and to minimize liability in these areas, including the policy of the Department (WDVA PP-9) to support the use of alternative work patterns in order to maximize the employment options available to existing and potential employees. Within the Bureau, the Program Services Section mission it to provide frontline customer service to veterans and CVSO's , determining eligibility for the Department's grant and benefit programs as well as the Wisconsin Veterans and Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit and the Wisconsin GI Bill programs.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Successfully completed centralized position review process for positions to be filled.
- Executed personnel moves in support of reorganization plan.
- Developed a Supervisor's Information Corner" on the Department's intranet.
- Developed and implemented an employee question mailbox to facilitate timely response to employee questions.
- Began updating older policies and the employee handbook.
- Established the Human Resources Information System (HRIS) for more effective data access.
- Achieved consistency of practice.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Increase hiring managers' awareness of veterans hiring initiatives.
- Increase emphasis on migration from paper to electronic record keeping.
- Increase training materials/opportunities for supervisors.

Division of Administration

- Audit human resources and payroll function at the Wisconsin Veterans Homes at King and Union Grove.
- Continue updating old policies.
- Continue department-wide COOP planning, training, and exercising.
- Coordinate move to a new building to generate lease savings.

Bureau of Fiscal Services

The mission of the Bureau of Fiscal Services (BFS) is to deliver high levels of financial services for accounts payable, accounts receivable and loan program accounting, as well as maintaining high levels of internal controls, compliance, and review procedures for all WDVA financial operations. Services provided by the Bureau include:

- Accounts payable processing (e.g., operating costs, travel vouchers, loan and grant disbursements).
- Accounts receivable and receipts processing.
- Loan accounting, servicing and credit bureau reporting.
- Maintaining WARS, WDVA's internal budget tracking and expenditure reporting control system.
- Maintenance of internal controls and compliance for fiscal transactions.
- Pre- and post-audit of financial transactions.
- Financial reporting to internal and external customers.
- Contract, purchase order and purchase card oversight.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Updated VBATS loan and status information for all WDVA-serviced loans.
- Purged more than 400 uncollectible loans.
- Implemented a batch payment process for the Military Funeral Honors Stipend Program.
- Implemented a state debt collection program.
- Centralized Accounts Payable processing in Madison.
- Implemented Purchase Plus requisition, purchase order and payment process for 2011-13 transactions.
- Implemented new Accounts Receivable process for Veterans Homes.
- Created a consolidated Homes finance section under the Bureau of Financial Services.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Standardize Electronic Charting System Accounts Receivable billing systems at King and Union Grove to achieve billing efficiencies.
- Standardize written procedures for Bureau functions.
- Implement a document imaging system for the Homes finance section.
- Analyze Medicare option for King.

Bureau of Information Systems

The mission of the Bureau of Information Systems (BOIS) is to provide information technology resources in support of WDVA's strategic and operational strategies. This IT support includes customer support (Help Desk, web page administration, IT training), technical support (network and desktop) and application development support. BOIS provides IT support for network hardware and software, desktop/laptop hardware and software, security, telecommunication equipment and software support. BOIS creates and maintains automated systems or processes that WDVA uses to support its business programs and to provide service to its customers which, in addition to WDVA staff, includes veterans and their families,

Division of Administration

CVSOs, TVSOs, and VSOs. BOIS is also responsible for Help Desk support, internet and intranet site design and maintenance, data entry, computer operations and IT training.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Continued imaging of DD214s and base files, with more than 991,000 and 75,000 imaged, respectively, as of September 8, 2011.
- Implemented Wireless Medication Administration Record in the skilled nursing facility at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove.
- Completed Veterans Benefits and Application Tracking System (VBATS) enhancements to allow authorized users to retrieve DD214s and base files from within VBATS.
- Created online access to the Wisconsin Veterans Museum's Civil War database.
- Began IT infrastructure planning for the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls.
- Achieved server consolidation via server virtualization – reducing the number of physical servers saving money, reducing rack space used and consuming less power.

Upcoming Initiatives

- IT planning, coordination and implementation of the Central Office relocation.
- Wisconsin Veterans Home – Chippewa Falls IT infrastructure implementation.
- Implement Wireless Medication Administration Record in the assisted living facilities at the Wisconsin Veterans Home at Union Grove.
- Migrate to Windows 7 client operating system via the desktop/laptop replacement cycle.
- Continue Imaging of DD214s and base files at Central Office.
- Implement imaging capabilities for the Milwaukee Claims Office and Homes Finance and Admissions.
- Complete server failover project at King.
- Complete Member Freedom project at King.
- Upgrade King MP2 Maintenance Work Order System.
- Support King phone system replacement project.
- Replace loan collections software.
- Continue VBATS Enhancements.
- Continue internet site redesign.
- Evaluate employee scheduling and timekeeping system for replacement.
- Automate funeral honors scheduling.
- Develop cemetery plot mapping, tracking and scheduling of interments.
- Develop cemetery pre-registration.
- Evaluate impact of PTA web migration for central office staff with data exchange and integration.
- Analyze costs to move to DOA server.

Division of Veterans Benefits and Services

Division Description

The Divisions of Veterans Benefits and Veterans Services administer an array of benefits, programs and services to eligible state veterans in order to supplement and complement those provided to veterans by the federal government.

Division Mission

The primary mission is to assist Wisconsin veterans in obtaining all federal and state benefits they are entitled to.

Programs and Services

- Home Mortgage Loans
- Home Improvement Loans
- Personal Loans
- Grants for education and job training
- Grants for health care
- Grants for basis subsistence
- Grants to County and Tribal Veterans Service Officers
- Grants to Veterans Service Organizations
- Interments for veterans and eligible family members
- Military Funeral Honors
- Job training, counseling and other services for homeless veterans and those at risk of becoming homeless
- Help in filing claims with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
- Veterans Outreach and Advocacy
- Military Discharge Reviews and Upgrades
- Wisconsin GI Bill
- Property Tax Credit
- Assistance for incarcerated veterans
- Transitional assistance to recently separated veterans

To deliver these benefits and services, Division staff within the organization units listed below, work closely with county veterans service officers (CVSOs), Tribal Veterans Services Officers (TVSOs) and veterans service organizations..

- Bureau of State Veterans Benefits
- Bureau of State Veterans Cemeteries
- Bureau of Claims
- Veterans Benefits Outreach
- State Approving Agency
- Troops to Teachers

Bureau of State Veterans Benefits

The Bureau of State Veterans Benefits offers an array of benefits to qualified Wisconsin veterans state-wide. The Bureau consists of the Property Management/Loan/Collections Section and the Grants Section. The Property Management/Loan/Collections Section administers Primary Mortgage, Personal Loan Program and Home Improvement Loans associated property management and collection functions. The Grants Section administers Veterans Retraining Grants, Veterans Education Reimbursement Grants, Assistance to Needy Veterans Grants consisting primarily of Health Care and Subsistence Care components and County/Veterans Service Organization Grants. A description of the loan and grant programs is referenced below:

Division of Veterans Benefits and Services

Primary Mortgage Home Loan Program (PML) – Provides 30-year, fixed rate mortgages for the purchase or construction of a veteran's principal residence. WDVA pays the origination fee for veterans who have a combined service connected disability rating of 30% or higher from the federal VA.

Personal Loan Program (PLP) – Offers mortgage-secured, low-interest home equity loans of up to \$25,000 and can be used for any purpose.

Home Improvement Loan Program (HILP) – Provides low-interest rate loans for repairs, alterations, construction and renovation of a veteran's principle residence.

Veterans Retraining Grant – Provides up to \$3,000 to recently unemployed or underemployed veterans who demonstrated financial need while enrolled in a training program expected to lead to employment.

Veterans Education Reimbursement Grants (VetEd) – Provides tuition and fee reimbursement to eligible veterans enrolled at most Wisconsin academic institutions. The VetEd provides eight (8) semesters or 120 credits towards a bachelor's degree, depending on length of active service.

Assistance to Needy Veterans Grant (ANVG) – Provides assistance for veterans who need vision, dental or hearing care; three areas not normally covered by the Federal VA for all veterans. This program also provides temporary emergency financial aid to veterans and their dependents in the event of an illness, disability or death. Grant awards for health care and subsistence aid combined cannot exceed the program's \$7,500 lifetime limit.

County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO) Grants – Supplements the operations of County Veterans Service Offices. The grants for counties with a full-time CVSO are based on total county population:

- \$8,500 for a county with a population of less than 20,000;
- \$10,000 for a county with a population of 20,000 to 45,499;
- \$11,500 for a county with a population of 45,500 to 74,999, and
- \$13,000 for a county with a population of 75,000 or more.
- Counties with a part-time CVSO may receive a \$500 grant.

Tribal Veterans Service Office (TVSO) Grants – Supplements the operations of Tribal Veterans Service Offices. The department may make annual grants of up to \$8,500 to eligible federally recognized American Indian tribes and bands.

Veterans' Service Organizations (VSO) Grants – Provides financial assistance to VSOs of up to \$30,000 to each veterans organization representing veterans who are filing claims for benefits from the USDVA.

Transportation Grants – Provides grants to the Wisconsin Department of Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and to counties with veterans not served by the DAV to provide transportation services to veterans traveling to USDVA - approved medical appointments

Division of Veterans Benefits and Services

Accomplishments 2009-2011

Total Veterans Trust Fund Benefits and Services Disbursed

July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2011

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Amount</i>
PLP	346	\$5,192,036
Retraining Grant	115	\$309,434
ANV	562	\$1,133,398
VetEd	1,460	\$2,996,659
VAP		\$1,763,668
CVSO	109	\$691,950
TVSO		\$68,000
Transportation	75	\$400,000
VSO	8	\$195,086
Funeral Honors ¹	10,596	\$516,925
Totals	13,271	\$13,267,156

WDVA Home Loans

July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2011

Primary Mortgage Loan	66	\$10,572,363
Home Improvement Loan	40	\$1,212,088
Totals	106	\$11,784,451

Table Data Source: WARS date paid

1. Funeral Honors Stipends are funded by General Purpose Revenue

Upcoming Initiatives

- Develop online applications for Department grant programs.
- Cross train personnel in all programs offered in the Bureau.

Division of Veterans Benefits and Services

Bureau of State Veterans Cemeteries

The Bureau of State Veterans Cemeteries maintains responsibility for two of the agency's tri-cemetery system at Spooner and Union Grove, the Military Funeral Honors Program and the Veterans Assistance Program. The Cemetery at King is maintained and operated by the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King. A description of the programs is referenced below:

State Veterans Cemeteries (Spooner, Union Grove and King) – Provides interments for veterans and eligible spouses at the Southern, Northern and Central Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemeteries.

Veterans Assistance Program (VAP) – Helps homeless veterans and those at-risk of becoming homeless receive the services they need to obtain steady employment and affordable housing. Currently homeless programs are located at Fort McCoy, Union Grove, Chippewa Falls and King.

Military Funeral Honors Program (MFHP) – Coordinates and provides military funeral honors for the interment of eligible Wisconsin veterans. A stipend of up to \$50 is paid to eligible Veterans Service Organizations who perform Military Funeral Honors.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Substantially completed Phase III construction (Columbarium and Burial Gardens) at Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery (SWVMC) through a \$5.275 million dollar construction grant from the USDVA.
- Was presented with National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Excellence of Appearance Awards for maintaining the cemetery grounds in an exceptional manner for the families and visitors of the Northern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery and Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemetery, an honor achieved by only one of seventy-four (74) state veterans cemeteries nationally.
- Interred 2,778 veterans and spouses over the biennium, 2,028 of which were conducted at SWVMC; the 5th busiest State Veterans Cemetery in the nation based on the number of interments.
- Conducted 17 military funeral honors training events across the State under the auspices of the Federal AP3 (Authorized Provider Partnership) Program. These training events involved 42 veterans' organizations with 351 members in attendance.
- Provided 2,523 military funeral honors with Department Military Funeral Honors Teams; a 13% increase from the previous biennium.
- Coordinated 12,697 military funeral honors with teams from the US Military, Veterans Service Organizations and WDVA, representing an increase of 5% over the last biennium.
- Disbursed a total of \$516,925 military funeral honor stipends to Veterans Service Organizations, an increase of 21% from the last biennium.
- Achieved an occupancy rate over 94% for homeless (veteran per diem) beds at Veterans Assistance Program sites at Union Grove, King, Chippewa Falls and Fort McCoy.
- Achieved an occupancy rate over 97% for single room occupancy beds at Veterans Assistance Program sites at Union Grove and Chippewa Falls.
- Passed all USDVA inspections conducted by the VA Medical Centers at Tomah, Milwaukee, Madison and Minneapolis for 2010 and 2011 for each of the Department's Veterans Assistance Program sites.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Implement a computerized scheduling system for the Honors Request Tracking system.
- Complete master plans for the Northern and Southern Wisconsin Veterans Memorial Cemeteries
- Integrate contractual burial services at SWVMC as authorized in the 2011-13 biennial budget.

Division of Veterans Benefits and Services

- Eliminate residency requirements for state Veterans Cemeteries.
- Develop and submit applications for expansion projects and operations/maintenance grants from the USDVA for NWVMC and SWVMC.
- Increase number of homeless beds by four at the Union Grove Veterans Assistance Program site.
- Solicit bids for a new contract for services for the operation of the Veterans Assistance Programs at Union Grove, King and Chippewa Falls.
- Renegotiate Union Grove and Chippewa Falls Veterans Assistance Program utility and maintenance costs with Department of Health Services.

Bureau of Claims

The Claims Bureau assists Wisconsin veterans and their dependents with federal claims for VA compensation, pension, education, medical care, and death benefits. The bureau is located at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Regional Office in Milwaukee.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- In federal fiscal year (FFY) 2009 Wisconsin Veterans received a total of \$744 million in compensation and pension benefits from the USDVA.
- In FFY 2010 Wisconsin Veterans received a total of \$808.7 million in compensation and pension benefits from the USDVA.
- Directly contributed to \$291.2 million in compensation and pension benefits received by Wisconsin Veterans in FFY 2010.
- Assisted in outreach efforts by participating in Veterans Supermarket events throughout the state.
- Responded to, on average, more than 70 phone calls, 100 pieces of mail, and 25-30 walk-in veterans, dependents and CVSOs about new or existing claims on a daily basis.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Develop and implement a new Accreditation Training Program for Claims Officers, CVSOs and Veterans Service Officers.
- Develop an ongoing training plan for accredited representatives.
- Implement an automated system for maintaining and distributing to CVSOs, claimant records at the Milwaukee Regional Office.
- Develop and implement standard operating procedures.
- Study and improve business processes within the claims office in an effort to enhance effectiveness of staff and operations, quality of work, and responsiveness to claims office customers.
- Continue to improve the quality and timeliness of information and communications provided by the Claims Office to veterans, CVSOs and VSOs.

Division of Veterans Benefits and Services

Outreach Unit

The Outreach unit works actively to inform veterans about accessing federal and state benefits, programs and services. This unit also provides assistance in the areas of discharge upgrades, services to incarcerated veterans and recently separated veterans, connections to military records, military awards and decorations (medals), and locating military records.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Coordinated and/or participated in more than 180 events throughout the State to include (but not limited to):
 - 9 Veterans Benefits Supermarkets where over 6,100 veterans attended and were serviced.
 - 14 Department of Workforce Development (DWD) sponsored and local Job Fairs with over 2000 veterans in attendance.
 - 28 UW and Tech School Campus Open House events with over 422 veterans being provided services.
 - 13 Re-integrations and Demobilizations conducted with 1300 returning Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), Operation New Dawn (OND) Veterans being provided services.
 - Warrior Summits held in Madison, Milwaukee and Waukesha.
 - UW Football Veterans Game, Veterans Day and Memorial Day Events, CVSO Regional Meetings and Conventions, 2010 and 2011 Annual Women Veterans Conferences, Military Retiree Events, Veterans Stand Downs, State and County Fairs.
 - 40 benefit presentations coordinated with DWD, for veterans losing employment due to plant closings or layoff.
- Conducted training for CVSOs and their support staff.
- Helped to establish the creation and/or proposals for 6 (six) new 'Veterans Treatment Courts' in the state through coordination of federal, state and county judiciary and law enforcement agencies.
- Provided benefit briefings to 448 incarcerated veterans, 263 of which were to newly-incarcerated veterans as they entered the Wisconsin prison system through the Department of Corrections in-take facility at Dodge Correctional Institution (DCI), Waupun.
- Sent over 15,000 welcome home and information packets to recently discharged service members from active military service (Active, National Guard, Reserves).
- Received and responded to over 400 individual veteran and/or legislative inquiries that came through the Department (i.e. Wisconsin Veterans and Surviving Spouses Property Tax Credit, Military Discharge Upgrades, Federal and Wisconsin GI Bill Benefits, Military Medals).
- Developed a new Women Veterans newsletter.
- Sponsored a U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs Women's Veterans Conference in May 2011.
- Held the 3rd annual Wisconsin Women Veterans Conference in September 2009 with 135 in attendance.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Work with the Department of Transportation to implement Women Veterans' license plate.
- Coordinate with the National Association of Black Veterans (NABVETS) to provide targeted outreach efforts to the state's African American veteran community.
- Meet with promoters, sponsors, other agencies and coordinators to plan Wisconsin Wounded Warrior Summit for 9/11 veterans, dedication for World War II veterans, Women Veterans Conference and Health Summits, Homeless Veterans Summit and Stand Downs, Employment and Benefit Career Fairs.

Division of Veterans Benefits and Services

- Create a Veterans Call Center and continue to look at new ideas and approaches to reach veterans through social media markets.
- Strengthen the partnership with Department of Workforce Development in order to address employment needs of Wisconsin veterans.

State Approving Agency (SAA)

The federally funded SAA approves education and training programs taught at Wisconsin colleges, universities and vocational training institutions so that eligible veterans may use federal veterans education benefits, such as the Montgomery G.I. Bill, while studying at these institutions and preparing for civilian employment. The SAA provides outreach to veterans and technical assistance to Wisconsin schools.

Accomplishments 2009-2011¹

- Visited approximately 92% of the 158 active schools to ensure that the schools met the standards under which their programs were approved.
- Responded to 97% of program approval inquiries within 14 days of receipt.
- Processed 93% of approval actions within 30 days of receipt.
- Submitted 100% of visit reports within 35 calendar days of visit.
- Submitted 100% of contract reimbursement invoices within 45 days of the end of the quarter.
- Received a rating of satisfactory from the JPRG (Joint Peer Review Group).
- Planned and hosted the NASAA Central Region Meeting in Madison, May 4-5, 2010; which was attended by eight (8) SAAs and the USDVA's Education Liaison Representative.
- Attended and gave presentations at the 2010 annual WACRAO (WI Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admission Officers) Veterans' Benefits Workshop at Madison College. The conference targets Wisconsin schools approved for federal education benefits and was attended by 120 personnel including VA officials, school certifying officials and others. SAA staff spoke extensively about the approval process including the SAA's annual supervisory visit to the school.
- Participated in the Interagency Meeting Group made-up of representatives from the UW and Wisconsin Technical College Systems, UWS, WDVA, Higher Education Aids Board, DOA and the Governor's office, where staff served as the expert witness regarding the WI GI Bill implementation and coordination with the public institutions and the federal VA education benefits.

¹ Reported accomplishments are for federal fiscal year 2010.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Redesign and implement improvements in the current SAA web application.

Division of Veterans Benefits and Services

Troops to Teachers Program (TTT)

Troops to Teachers (TTT) is a joint program of the U.S. Departments of Defense and Education that assists departing active duty military personnel, veterans and certain members/retirees who are associated with the reserve components, to transition to new careers as public school teachers. The program coordinator is the TTT coordinator for the States of Wisconsin and Minnesota and the position and activities associated with it are 100% federally funded.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Eight hires - three in Minnesota and five in Wisconsin. The in-state hires included placements in Milwaukee, Kenosha, Eau Claire and the Northland Pines district, Vilas County.
- Added 123 new TTT participants who meet basic eligibility standards, are approved for funding and administrative support, but are not yet in a teaching position, into the national database; 50 individuals in Minnesota and 73 in Wisconsin.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Coordinate with the Department of Public Instruction to identify individuals who apply for licensure and make them aware of their possible eligibility for TTT benefits.

Division of Veterans Homes

Division Description

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs – Division of Veteran’s Homes consists of three campuses located at King, Union Grove, and Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. The Veterans Home at King provides skilled nursing home services for up to 721 veterans. The Veterans Home at Union Grove provides skilled nursing home services for up to 120 veterans, and is currently licensed to serve up to 123 veterans at the assisted living level of care. The Veterans Home at Chippewa Falls is a 72 bed skilled nursing facility that is currently under construction and projected to open by November 2012.

Division Mission

Our Vision- To be the best at caring for our nations heroes serving as an exemplary model to all veterans homes across the country.

Our Mission- To serve those who served as we pioneer an environment of excellence in the provision of healthcare services.

Our Values- “what matters most to us”

- Our nations heroes.
- Our competent and caring employees.
- The trust of all veterans and veteran stakeholders.
- Our commitment to professionalism.
- Honor, respect and dignity for all veterans.
- Financial Solvency.
- A “can do” attitude.

Programs and Services

- Skilled nursing services
- Long term Care
- Short term rehabilitation Services
- Restorative Nursing Care
- Pharmacy Services
- Dementia and Alzheimer Care
- Radiology and EKG
- Dental Care
- Laboratory Services
- Dietary and Nutritional Services
- Social Services
- Podiatry
- Optometry
- Audiology
- Respiratory Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Medical Transportation
- Recreational Therapy
- Physician Services and Consultants

Division of Veterans Homes

Veterans Home at King

The Wisconsin Veterans Home at King was founded in 1887 by the Grand Army of the Republic, a Civil War Veterans Organization. The Home is the largest skilled nursing facility in the state, serving up to 721 members. Eligible Wisconsin veterans and their spouses or surviving spouses may become members of the Veterans Home at King.

The Veterans Home is located on the shores of Rainbow Lake, on the picturesque Chain O'Lakes near Waupaca. The campus includes four licensed skilled nursing facilities and operates similar to a small city operating its own power plant, public works bureau, medical staff, cemetery, and logistics staff. The Home offers many services on site including:

Ainsworth Hall, the newest of the four licensed buildings, includes a specialized first floor living area that allows members with Alzheimer's disease or other dementia to move freely in a secure, safe environment,

Health Care Services

- Physician Visits
- Skilled Nursing Care
- Dental Services
- Physical Therapy
- Occupational Therapy
- Speech Therapy
- Respiratory Therapy
- Social Services
- Pharmacy
- Laboratory Services
- Diagnostic Imaging Services
- Medical Transportation

Activities

- Bowling Alley
- Theater
- Woodworking Shop
- Ceramics
- Fitness Center
- Boating/Fishing
- Full Service Library
- Computer Center
- Mini Golf
- Bingo
- Pool Tables
- Work Therapy

General Services

- Members Council
- Dietary Services
- Monthly Member Food Advisory Committee
- Barber/Beautician Services
- Security/Fire Protection
- Laundry Services
- Housekeeping
- Volunteer Program
- Pastoral Care Services
- Coffee Shop
- Gift Shop
- Transportation Services

including an outdoor patio and garden area.

Annually, 370 volunteers, including staff and members of the Home contribute over 77,000 hours of service time. Veteran service organizations and other civic organizations sponsor trips for members to various sites in the area and throughout the state that continue to enrich the lives of the members.

Accomplishments 2009 – 2011

Delivery of Quality Health Care:

- Participated in "Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes":
 - Pressure Ulcers Prevention and Reduction
 - Pain Management
 - Increasing Staff Retention
- Received Dementia Training by the Alzheimer's and Dementia Alliance of Wisconsin for 340 employees, including over 275 nursing employees.
- Made a Clinical Social Worker with AODA Training available to members.
- Arranged for mobile X-rays to be available afternoons, evenings, and weekends on campus, as well as week days.
- Offered a Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN) Stipend Program, whereby Certified Nursing Assistants attend courses for career advancement and after successful testing work at the Home in the LPN role.

Division of Veterans Homes

- Expanded eLearning through a computer-based education program.
- Increased use of teleconferences, webinars, and online training opportunities.
- Actively participated in a leadership role in the Wisconsin Pressure Ulcer Coalition – Pressure Ulcer Reduction and Prevention Project.
- Implemented the statewide smoking ban.

Infrastructure Improvements:

- Renovated the Marden Memorial Center:
 - Opened a member fitness center opened through the generous donations of veteran service organizations and numerous individuals.
 - Updated the bowling lanes and social meeting room.
 - Updated the theater and the computer center within the full-service library.
- Completed the Olson Hall window replacement project.
- Constructed sitting shelters for m.
- Completed power plant chiller and cooling tower upgrade.
- Remodeled the Occupational Therapy and Physical Therapy rooms in MacArthur Hall.
- Replaced the roof on MacArthur Hall.
- Expanded wireless internet computer access throughout campus.
- Completed a comprehensive facility assessment study with an architectural/engineering firm.
- Completed a central laundry energy upgrades, replacing dryers and folder.
- Linked HAM radio system to community emergency response system via a grant (no cost to the Veterans Home at King with volunteers operating the emergency radios).

- Implemented required furloughs in a manner that resulted in decreased overtime expenditures.
- Bargained local agreements for ten (10) bargaining units.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Upgrade elevators in Stordock and Olson Halls, including two additional elevators to accommodate members.
- Upgrade the telephone system campus wide, to include the placement of telephones in all member rooms.
- Complete HVAC controls and ventilation upgrades in each Resident Hall, Central Services and the Marden Memorial Center.
- Upgrade the water softening and heating system, including hot water storage.
- Offer annual Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) training program for veterans.
- Continue to streamline admissions process.
- Increase member satisfaction and partnerships by coordinating special member events.

Division of Veterans Homes

Veterans Home at Union Grove

The Veterans Home at Union Grove is located on the campus of the Southern Wisconsin Center (SWC). The facilities at the Union Grove Home include: a 40- and 41-bed community-based residential facility (CBRF), one of which provides memory care services for veterans and their spouses, and a 42-bed residential care apartment complex (RCAC), collectively referred to as assisted living facilities; and a 120-bed skilled nursing facility (SNF).

Boland Hall, the 120-bed SNF, offers the following services:

- Skilled nursing care
- Visits by physicians and nurse practitioners
- Dental services
- Physical, occupational and speech therapy
- Podiatry services
- Social services
- Hospice care

Maurer Hall is connected to Boland Hall and houses the administrative offices, kitchen, chapel and other spaces dedicated for activities for the Members, including ceramics, woodworking shop, leather crafts and a library and computer center.

Gates Hall is licensed as a 42-bed RCAC, but is currently closed to admissions pending the start of renovations to convert it to a 38-bed skilled nursing facility.

Fairchild Hall is licensed as a 40-bed CBRF providing memory care services and Shemanske Hall as a 41-bed CBRF providing standard care. Each CBRF provides the following services:

- Nursing services
- Social Services
- Medication management
- Dietary services
- Transportation to offsite medical services
- Activities
- Member Council

Accomplishments 2009 – 2011

- Began offering hospice services for members.
- Trained nursing staff to provide I.V. therapy services to members.
- Developed a reorganization plan that repurposes Gates Hall from a residential care apartment complex to a licensed, skilled nursing facility to provide services for which there is strong demand and institute a business model that will successfully balance revenues and expenditures.
- Engaged an architectural/engineering firm to evaluate the feasibility of converting Gates Hall from an RCAC to a SNF.
- Relocated Veterans Home members residing in Gates Hall to other facilities on campus.
- Started renovations to Fairchild Hall to improve lighting, replace metal ceiling tiles, replace dining room flooring, redesign courtyards and improve landscaping.
- Expanded the parking area for Boland Hall.

Division of Veterans Homes

- Replaced windows in Maurer Hall to improve energy efficiency and reduce utility costs.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Develop a comprehensive, five-year business plan for the Veterans Homes at Union Grove.
- Renovate Gates Hall to a 38-bed skilled nursing facility.
- Complete the second phase of renovations in Fairchild Hall, including carpeting, laundry room improvements, and additional ceiling lighting improvements.
- Implement the electronic medical record (EMR) for AL members and Certified Nursing Assistants for members located in the skilled nursing facility.
- Install a wander guard system for Boland Hall elevators.
- Upgrade the HVAC systems in Fairchild and Shemanske Halls.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Division Description

The Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs (WDVA) operates three museums accredited by the American Association of Museums. Its main facility, the Wisconsin Veterans Museum—Madison (WVMM), is located on the Capitol Square; the Wisconsin National Guard Memorial Museum (WNGM) at Volk Field; and the Wisconsin Veterans Museum –King (WVMK), on the grounds of the Wisconsin Veterans Home at King.

Division Mission

The mission of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum is to commemorate, acknowledge, and affirm the role of Wisconsin citizens in American military history, past and present. (s. 45.014, Wis. Stats.)

Division Goals

- Continue planning of Joint Preservation Storage Facility and New Museum Complex.
- Honor veterans and their role in shaping our nation’s history.
- Operate with financial and staffing efficiency to support the mission of WDVA.

Strategic Evaluation

- Evaluate public programs and services – formative and summative evaluations.
- Evaluate effectiveness of WNG Museum; analyze visitation patterns and store performance.
- Evaluate Museum hours of operation; analyze operational costs.
- Perform comprehensive budget analysis to control costs and maximize efficiency.
- Identify opportunities to expand historic interpretation at King Veterans Home and Union Grove.

Programs and Activities

- Public Programs and Exhibitions
- Marketing and Development
- Museum Research Center/Archives
- Education
- Store Operations and Visitor Services
- Collections Management Program
- Wisconsin National Guard Museum

Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Public Programs and Exhibitions

Support the Museum's mission by developing educational outreach materials, conceiving and developing exhibits and public programs.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Achieved record attendance for public programming, averaging nearly 100 patrons per event in 2010 (4,137 in 2009, 4,565 in 2010).
- Continued growth and expansion of the Talking Spirits cemetery tour – expanded the tour to 4 days in 2009-10.
- Planned, executed, and evaluated programs and exhibitions for LZ Lambeau event in May 2010. Improved statewide outreach by hosting veteran listening sessions in Ashland, Viroqua, Antigo, and Grafton to help shape LZ Lambeau event.
- Mounted “Faces in the Sand,” an artifact-based temporary exhibit highlighting Wisconsin's role in Operations Enduring and Iraqi Freedom.
- Installed “From Paper to Iron,” an artifact-based temporary exhibit highlighting Wisconsin's role in the first two years of the Civil War (closes 9/30/2012).
- Redeveloped components of the museum's permanent galleries – removed objects and furniture from the GAR/Veterans Gallery for new Civil War exhibition and updated Huey helicopter to wartime appearance.
- Continued growth and expansion of existing partnerships with the Wisconsin Book Festival, Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission, Monona Terrace, and the University of Wisconsin.
- Developed new temporary exhibitions on Vietnam photographer Robert Ellison (displayed at Neville Museum in Green Bay and Cardinal Stritch College), Wisconsin's Iraq and Afghanistan KIAs (The Rise of the Fallen – displayed at WVM and the Milwaukee County War Memorial).
- Developed new programming for the museum galleries – “The Wisconsin Letters Project” featuring dramatic reading of Civil War letters from the WVM archives.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Evaluate existing core exhibits for potential re-development.
- Evaluate and consider use of new technologies to create engaging exhibits, including smart phones and Augmented Reality.
- Integrate education strategy with exhibit concepts.
- Participate in interpretive planning process for New Museum Complex.
- Partner with other educational institutions and cultural entities to co-sponsor symposiums.
- Develop and implement WWII recognition event at EAA in May 2012.
- Begin development of new temporary Civil War exhibit set to open in 2013.
- Begin development of new temporary exhibit featuring veteran artwork and testimonials about treating PTSD with art therapy – opens in 2013.
- Continue development of arts-based programming for museum galleries using objects and archival items from WVM.
- Develop traveling exhibitions (available for a rental fee).
- Forge new relationships with community partners to expand attendance and donation bases; continue work with UW-Madison.
- Evaluate Veterans Home at King for increased development of public exhibits and interpretation of historic structures.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Marketing and Development

Support the Museum and its programs by increasing the positive public perception of WVM and WDVA. Work as the Department liaison with Wisconsin Veterans Museum Foundation; assist with Foundation fundraising efforts and donor management.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Developed institutional marketing plan.
- Redeveloped Museum website to offer better functionality, more resources, and retail sales capabilities.
- Increased outreach initiatives aimed at veterans and natural affinity groups.
- Increased contact with stakeholders and new audiences by incorporating new technologies, e-news blasts and social media platforms.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Develop consumer relevant institutional brand, consistent with WDVA and customer expectations.
- Develop additional marketing tools to extend mission and message beyond Dane County.
- Prepare strategies associated with major fund raising campaign for New Museum Complex
- Identify and apply for grants.
- Expand “Military History Day” event in cooperation with Wm. Britain Company.

Museum Research Centers/Archives

Support the Museum and its mission by acquiring, processing and safeguarding archival materials relevant to Wisconsin veterans.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Processed 372 oral history transcriptions.
- Processed 152 manuscript collections.
- Developed and implemented searchable online Civil War database.
- Presented at a statewide genealogical conference.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Integrate artifact and archival collections database information.
- Develop digital photo database for online accessibility.
- Contribute oral history material for website resources.
- Complete online databases for Spanish-American War and WWI.
- Increase public accessibility by providing additional web-based resources.

Education

In support of the Museum’s mission, promote lifelong learning through innovative educational programs, exhibits, and outreach activities.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Set an attendance record for the Cemetery Tour in 2010.
- Provided educational programming to 2,000 students from the greater Green Bay area at LZ Lambeau.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum

- Served more than 2,000 students annually with the Travel Trunk outreach program.
- Assisted with development of History Center interpretive planning project through student and teacher workshops.
- Developed new family-oriented program “Eagles on the Square”.
- Implemented teacher survey.
- Continued support of the museum through management of volunteer program.

Upcoming initiatives

- Develop and consistently implement visitor and teacher survey processes.
- Integrate education strategy with exhibit concepts.
- Integrate State and Federal standards into educational activities and curricula.
- Integrate educational resources with Museum website.

Store Operations and Visitor Services

Manage a retail operation that supports the Museum by providing a wide range of merchandise that is substantially related to the Museum’s mission; serve as initial point of visitor contact for the Museum.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Increased the Total Sales of the Gift Store in each Fiscal Year from 2009 (\$70,154) to 2010 (\$84,715) to 2011 (\$95,974).
- Improved the Per Capita levels of the Gift Store Sales from 2009 (\$1.02/visitor) to 2010 (\$1.18/visitor) to 2011 (\$1.54/visitor).
- Maintained responsible levels of spending with Museum Gift Store in terms of Goods/Services expenditures with product development from 2009 (\$67,201) to 2010 (\$68,177) to 2011 (\$71,037).
- Decreased LTE hours by 100 hours per month from 288 in October 2010 to 188 in June 2011 while retaining efficient operations.
- Supported the events of Museum Staff and Programs .
- Participated in various Outreach initiatives.
- Developed new mission-related product lines.
- Improved Sales reporting and inventory systems and comparative analyses.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Develop online retail sales module on new website.
- Tie Museum store to institutional marketing plan and calendar.
- Continue to develop levels of Customer Service integral to the growth of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum through increased training and product knowledge.
- Meet defined growth plan that expects to merge storefront and online for 15% growth in total sales over next two fiscal years and 25% by fiscal year 2014.
- Develop working relationships with Gift Store Managers in area, region and Museum Store Association in order to improve efficiency and increase profit.
- Manage new tour programs using the latest technologies through Smartphone and Augmented Reality programs.

Wisconsin Veterans Museum

Collections Management Program

Supports the mission of the Museum by preserving and safeguarding the artifact collection.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Completed in-depth planning for Joint Preservation Storage Facility.
- Created online collections database for increased public access to museum collection.
- Implemented volunteer cataloging program to assist with backlog and employ valuable knowledge of veteran volunteers.
- Cataloged and photographed over 1500 museum objects.
- Filled vacant collections position, Collections Manager.
- Revised Collections Policy.
- Selected, installed and rotated objects for multiple gallery updates, including Paper to Iron.
- Provided historic objects to Executive Residence for exhibit by request of First Lady.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Finish revisions of Museum Disaster Plan and implement active training program, including on-site workshop.
- Complete full inventory and photography of object collection.
- Hire and train 2 new project personnel for inventory and move preparation.
- Create comprehensive move plan to Joint Preservation Storage Facility.
- Improve security by re-keying high value zones and implementing key inventory system.

Wisconsin National Guard Museum

As a part of the Wisconsin Veterans Museums system, commemorate, acknowledge and affirm role of Wisconsin National Guard.

Accomplishments 2009-2011

- Installed additional exhibit elements in lobby.
- Received outside funding for the purchase of new display cabinetry.
- Re-developed the West gallery displays Began re-development planning of East Gallery.
- Installed WNG history exhibit Wisconsin Military Academy and USPFO.

Upcoming Initiatives

- Complete redevelopment of core East Gallery exhibit.
- Complete lighting installation in north-end exhibit hall.
- Follow through with building maintenance including painting, new roof, fire system, and security system.

