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Rick Scott
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Pam Bondi
Attorney General
Jeff Atwater
Chief Financial Officer
Adam Putnam
Commissioner of Agriculture

DATE: January 26, 2015

TO: The Honorable Rick Scott
The Honorable Pam Bondi
The Honorable Jeff Atwater
The Honorable Adam Putnam

FROM: Mike Prendergast
Executive Director

SUBJECT: Quarterly Report – Second Quarter 2014-2015

The Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs submits this Quarterly Report for the Second Quarter of the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year, covering the period October 1 – December 31, 2014.

This Quarterly Report is submitted pursuant to the procedures authorized by Rules 55-1.003 and 55-2.010, Florida Administrative Code. The report will be placed on the agenda at a future meeting of the Governor and Cabinet.

If you have any questions regarding any matter covered by this report, please contact Deputy Executive Director Al Carter at (727) 518-3202, or acting Legislative and Cabinet Affairs Director Colleen Krepstekies at (850) 487-1533.

CC: Senator Rene Garcia, Chairman, Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee
Senator Thad Altman, Chairman, Military Affairs, Space and Domestic Security Committee
Representative Kenneth L. Roberson, Chairman, Health Innovation Sub-Committee
Representative Matt Hudson, Chairman, Health Care Appropriations Sub-Committee
Representative Jimmie T. Smith, Chairman, Veterans and Military Affairs Sub-Committee
Cynthia Kelly, Director, Governor's Office of Policy and Budget

Attachment 1: FDVA Quarterly Report

ATTACHMENT 1

FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS SECOND QUARTER REPORT October 1 – December 31, 2014

This report covers the activities of the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs (FDVA) for the Second Quarter of the 2014-2015 Fiscal Year.

1. **Administrative Highlights:**

a. **Current Issues/Concerns**

Executive Direction: Executive Director Mike Prendergast continued his campaign of advocating with purpose and passion for Florida veterans and linking them to superior services, benefits and support. Colonel Prendergast presented department overviews and updates on current federal and state legislative initiatives to veterans' groups, civic groups, and legislative committees. He met with local business and organizations within the state to discuss outreach programs and projects to assist veterans. Colonel Prendergast served as the keynote speaker at the National Association of Veteran Program Administrators 39th Annual Conference in Orlando. He also served as the keynote speaker at the University of North Florida's 4th annual Veterans Day Tribute in Jacksonville. Colonel Prendergast represented Governor Scott at the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Florida Southeast Chapter 70th Anniversary Gala in West Palm Beach, and presented the Governor's proclamation honoring the survivors of the Battle of the Bulge.

New State Veterans' Nursing Home: Planning for the state's seventh state veterans' nursing home, to be located in the Port St. Lucie community of Tradition, continued during the quarter. The \$36 million nursing home is slated to open in late 2017.

St. Lucie County was awarded the site for the seventh state veterans' nursing home following a unanimous vote at the Sept. 23, 2014 Cabinet Meeting. The home will serve the catchment area of the following counties; St. Lucie, Indian River, Brevard, Lake, Marion, Seminole, Martin, Okeechobee, Glades, Osceola, Hendry, Highlands, Polk and Palm Beach. St. Lucie County will deed the 28.5 acres to the state in the near future, as the home will be operated by the State of Florida.

By May 2015, the vendor, RLF Architectural Designs, will send the architectural plans to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, which will fund \$23.5 million of the total cost of the project. The state will fund the remaining \$12.7 million.

The 100,000-square-foot, 128-bed facility is expected to break ground in the late fall. Applications and hiring of its 190 estimated employees will begin about nine months before opening.

• **Division of Benefits and Assistance:**

Bureau of Veterans' Claims: Claims Services team members continue to positively adapt and respond to the changing policies and procedures of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). As electronic media replaces traditional paper claim files, procedures were modified for the submission and review of claims, appeals and preparation for hearings. Through diligence and reorganization, the claims service has

kept in step with the VA, making the transition appear seamless to veterans we serve. This quarter, the bureau advocated for over 27,000 veterans and their families. Claims Services helped to ensure veterans receive maximum benefits they have earned and provided a current status of their pending claim or appeal. The Claims Service Office represented 110 veterans before judges at the Board of Veteran Appeals, advocating for benefits sought. For two of these cases, the Veterans' Claims Examiners (VCEs) were able to obtain a complete grant of benefits on the same day.

Additionally, the Claims Service Office had 113 hearings scheduled to represent and assist veterans to present their cases to the VA Regional Office regarding increased benefits or retention of their benefits. VCEs worked with the VA to resolve 64% of claims in favor of the veteran without the necessity of the veteran traveling to the VA Regional Office. Overall, 90% of veterans retained their benefits at the current level and the remaining 10% are yet to be decided by the VA. The Bureau also reviewed over 8,400 disability claims for veterans' benefits, ensuring that the VA's decision was within the laws and regulations set by Congress.

Bureau of Field Services: The Orlando zone acquired additional office space at American Legion Headquarters, Orlando and Career Source Central Florida. Osceola County and Miami acquired space at the Pompano Vet Center, enabling increased outreach and service to Florida veterans and their families. Field Services' David Austin, Harry Rudy and Ernie Kuykendall provided training at the Florida Department of Veterans' Affairs Certification Course, December 1-4. This quarter, Field Services attended 180 outreach events providing benefit information to 13,153 veterans and their families.

The Bureau of State Approving for Veterans' Education and Training (or State Approving Agency/SAA): During the quarter, the State Approving Agency received their annual performance review results from the Joint Peer Review Group, which is comprised of VA Central Office and National Association of State Approving Agency appointees. The Florida SAA received a Satisfactory score, the highest score attainable from this group. In addition, Bureau Chief Betsy Wickham and Program Specialist Kathy Snyder were presented with Distinguished Service Awards by the National Association of Veteran Program Administrators (NAVPA) for their significant contributions to the betterment of military members, their families and for their support and contributions to NAVPA.

b. **Audits**

- No internal or external audits were finalized this quarter.

c. **Consultants**

- No new consultants were contracted, nor were any existing agreements changed this quarter.

d. **Contracts**

- Lopez SVNH “Building Rehabilitation” contract with DMS (Project Agent) completed; final payment on 9/18/14, closed out on 10/7/14.
- Bennett SVNH “HVAC Commissioning” contract with DMS (Project Agent) completed; final payment on 9/18/14, closed out on 10/7/14.
- Lopez SVNH “Chiller Removal and Replacement” contract with DMS (Project Agent) executed on 6/20/14; DMS activated engineering services on 8/1/14; project commencement pending DMS activation of construction services as of 12/31/14.
- Sims SVNH “Chiller Removal and Replacement” contract with DMS (Project Agent) executed on 8/13/14; DMS activated engineering services on 9/26/14; project commencement pending DMS activation of construction services as of 12/31/14.
- Jenkins SVDH “Chiller Removal and Replacement” solicitation; under development as of 12/31/14.
- FDVA “Health Information Technology System” (MDIA/Matrix-Care) contract Amendment No. 3 executed on 10/14/14; provided additional onsite physician order training sessions at Lassen, Nininger, Jenkins, and Lopez SVNH’s.
- Bennett SVNH “Nurse Call System” contract Change Order No. 3, with JSC Systems, executed on 10/14/14; extended contract completion date to 1/2/15 (due to required State/AHCA approvals).
- Bennett SVNH “Nurse Call System” contract Change Order No. 4, with JSC Systems, executed on 12/11/14; extended contract completion date to 3/16/15 (due to required State/AHCA approvals).
- FDVA “Time Clock System” (IT Computing Services) contract Amendment No. 1 executed on 10/7/14; provided updated language regarding financial consequences per CFO audit finding.
- FDVA contract with “Florida is for Veterans” (programs for state residency and career/hiring); execution pending as of 12/31/14.
- FDVA “New State Veterans’ Home” legislative appropriation provided on 7/1/14. DMS (Project Agent) executed architect/engineer agreement 10/20/14. DMS (Project Agent) execution of construction agreement pending as of 12/31/14. FDVA receipt of USDVA funding letter and USDVA/FDVA Memorandum of Agreement pending as of 12/31/14.
- FDVA “Veterans’ Benefits Information System” solicitation (replacing V-BOLTS) issued 12/1/14. FDVA Addendum No. 1 issued on 12/19/14. Deadline for vendors to submit proposals is 1/13/15 (proposal opening meeting).
- FDVA “Medicare/Medicaid Cost Reporting” solicitation (replacing prior contract w/Moore Stephens Lovelace P.A.); under development as of 12/31/14.
- FDVA certification of Florida Veterans Foundation (FVF) annual performance for fiscal year 2013-14; pending as of 12/31/14.
- Update on US Food and Sysco merger pending approval of federal regulators; as of 12/31/14.

e. **Leases**

- FDVA made no additions, alterations, or modifications to leased space this quarter.

f. **Lawsuits/Claims in Litigation or Settled this Quarter**

- **2 General Liability Claims** (0 new this quarter): 0 won, 0 settled, 0 lost, 2 pending
- **3 Employment Liability Claims** (1 new this quarter): 2 won, 2 settled, 0 lost, 1 pending

g. **Donations**

Cash Donations by State Veterans' Home

<i>FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015</i>	<i>FIRST QUARTER</i>	<i>SECOND QUARTER</i>	<i>THIRD QUARTER</i>	<i>FOURTH QUARTER</i>	<i>Total, Year to Date</i>
Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	\$1,014.27	\$521.01			\$1,535.28
Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	\$9,227.06	\$15,657.00			\$24,884.06
Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	\$1,000.00	\$20.00			\$1,020.00
Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	\$1,000.00	\$299.00			\$1,299.00
Sims SVNH, Panama City	\$1,000.00	\$200.62			\$1,200.62
Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	\$1,000.00	\$225.00			\$1,225.00
Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	\$1,000.00	\$275.00			\$1,275.00

Non-Cash Donations

- Jenkins State Veterans' Domiciliary – Lake City
No Donations this quarter
- Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home – Daytona Beach:
No Donations this quarter
- Lopez State Veterans' Nursing Home – Land O Lakes
Xbox Kinect 360 w/wireless controller \$199.00
Misc. books
- Nininger State Veterans' Nursing Home – Pembroke Pines
Karaoke Machine SMG-901 \$99.00
Peter Vitalie/Lord Nelson Pool Table \$,5990.00
- Sims State Veterans' Nursing Home – Springfield
TV Flat screen 24" \$139.00
- Jacobson State Veterans' Nursing Home – Port Charlotte
TV LED 50" Emerson \$400.00
Sony DVD player \$99.00
Misc. DVD's

- Lassen State Veterans' Nursing Home – St Augustine
Wheelchair Hoveround Lg. \$1,600.00
Walker

h. Memberships in Professional Organizations Paid this Quarter

- Jenkins SVDH, Lake City 50-40-10 NASVH \$900.00
- Bennett SVNH, Daytona Bch. 50-50-10 NASVH \$900.00
- Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes 50-60-10 NASVH \$900.00
- Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines 50-70-10 NASVH \$900.00
- Sims SVNH, Panama City 50-80-10 NASVH \$900.00
- Jacobson SVNH, Pt. Charlotte 50-90-10 NASVH \$900.00
- Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine 50-95-10 NASVH \$900.00

2. Division of Benefits and Assistance: Statistics

- Summary of veterans' benefits derived vs. cost of the benefits staff: \$109:1 (ROI).

a. Bureau of Veterans' Claims

<i>EVENT 2014-2015</i>	<i>FIRST QUARTER</i>	<i>SECOND QUARTER</i>	<i>THIRD QUARTER</i>	<i>FOURTH QUARTER</i>	<i>YEAR TO DATE</i>	<i>PREVIOUS FY to this Qtr</i>
Retroactive compensation	\$36,770,963	\$29,067,865			\$65,838,828	\$102,874,882
Largest single retro. benefit	\$292,897	\$502,803			\$795,700	\$732,417
Debt relief	\$77,113	\$133,494			\$210,607	\$140,071
Notices of Disagreement	526	575			1,101	672
Statements of Argument in Appeals Cases*	179	241			420	595
Act as Representative at Hearings*	82	102			184	51
Veterans' Appeals Hearings*	55	111			166	114
Ratings Reviewed	10,039	8,500			18,539	20,051

* The appeals representation process includes formal filing of the appeal application, and paralegal representation with the veteran at the Regional Office and in teleconferences with the Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA).

b. Bureau of State Approving for Veterans' Training (SAA)

<i>EVENT 2014-2015</i>	<i>FIRST QUARTER</i>	<i>SECOND QUARTER</i>	<i>THIRD QUARTER</i>	<i>FOURTH QUARTER</i>	<i>YEAR TO DATE</i>	<i>PREVIOUS FY to this Qtr</i>
SAA Programs Approved	3,671	2,551			6,222	4,428
Other Approval	778	649			1,427	879
Compliance Visits	40	28			68	64
Inspection Visits	12	13			25	17
Outreach Activities*	185	204			389	332
Liaison Activities**	183	142			325	505
Technical Assistance***	1,050	857			1,097	1,608

* Outreach Activities are any activity designed to inform or encourage those with entitlement to use it.

** Liaison activities are those that foster education about the SAA with other education and training professionals, which promote and encourage the exchange of information and support to raise awareness of the professional nature of the SAA approval function.

*** Technical assistance is any interaction designed to assist an individual or a facility with any aspect of the approval function.

c. Bureau of Veteran Field Services

<i>EVENT 2014-2015</i>	<i>FIRST QUARTER</i>	<i>SECOND QUARTER</i>	<i>THIRD QUARTER</i>	<i>FOURTH QUARTER</i>	<i>YEAR TO DATE</i>	<i>PREVIOUS FY to this Qtr</i>
Issue Resolution	5,304	4,790			10,094	9,853
Total Amount	\$14,627,699	\$14,284,148			\$28,911,847	\$26,975,135
Outreach Visits	198	180			378	271
Veterans Served at Outreach	15,365	13,153			28,518	24,847
Bedside Interviews	3,138	3,049			6,187	9,201
Walk-ins/ Counseling	33,060	31,164			64,224	65,543
Claims	8,310	7,685			15,995	13,029
Voter Regis/ Pref forms	3,060	2,893			5,953	5,036
Homeless Walk In	933	543			1,476	1,532
Ratings Reviewed Orlando/W Palm	260	146			406	1,525

d. Outreach*

EVENT 2014-2015	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	THIRD QUARTER	FOURTH QUARTER	YEAR TO DATE	PREVIOUS FY to this Qtr
Reintegration and Pre-Deployment Events for Guard and Reserve units	4	3			7	13
Homeless Veteran Stand Down Events	7	7			14	14
Medical Center Welcome Home events	0	0			0	3
Congressional Open House events	9	8			17	9
National Conferences	0	0			0	1
New Patient Orientation	67	35			102	68
Transition Assistance Briefings	10	8			18	8
Other	102	180			282	145

* Supervisors and VCEs throughout the Division of Veterans' Benefits and Assistance provide presentation, orientations, and briefings on state, federal, and local veterans' laws and benefits.

3. State Veterans' Homes Program

State Veterans' Homes Census

FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015	FIRST QUARTER	SECOND QUARTER	THIRD QUARTER	FOURTH QUARTER	YEAR TO DATE	PREVIOUS FY, same 1/4
Jenkins SVDH, Lake City	97.23%	97.72%			97.48%	86.95%
Bennett SVNH, Daytona Beach	99.65%	98.70%			99.18%	99.75%
Lopez SVNH, Land O' Lakes	99.75%	99.63%			99.69%	99.60%
Nininger SVNH, Pembroke Pines	98.32%	97.45%			97.89%	99.00%
Sims SVNH, Panama City	99.75%	99.88%			99.82%	99.95%
Jacobson SVNH, Port Charlotte	99.54%	98.70%			99.12%	99.50%
Lassen SVNH, St. Augustine	99.72%	99.90%			99.81%	99.60%

a. Quality of Care:

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) advised FDVA that grant funds are available for the resident ceiling lift project for the FDVA skilled nursing homes– FAI# 12-024. Ceiling Lifts provide an easy-to-operate system that eliminates the need for manual lifting, thereby reducing the risk of injuries to the veteran and caregiver.

These ceiling mounted lift's use less space and is readily available for the caregiver, making efficient use of time and space. A single caregiver can carry out transfers quickly and efficiently, controlling all of the processes via a handheld control unit. This type of system also saves staff time, as it is always accessible, ready for use and within easy reach for the caregiver. When the lift system is not in use, it is conveniently and discreetly stored away on the overhead track, out of sight and automatically recharging, thereby freeing up precious floor space.

These ceiling lift systems provide a new sense of confidence to even the toughest patient transfers. This new handling equipment will help to reduce the anxiety, uncertainty, and discomfort that the caregivers faces when repositioning or lifting even the most challenging patient.

At FDVA the ceiling lift's is one way we continue with our focus of improving the Quality of Life in the home, helping to preserve a secure, safe and comfortable environment for all our of veterans.

b. Occupancy Trends:

- By 2026, the population of Americans ages 65 and older will double to 71.5 million.
- Between 2007 and 2015, the number of Americans ages 85 and older is expected to increase by 40 percent.
- Among people turning 65 today, 69 percent will need some form of long-term care, whether in the community or in a residential care facility.
- By 2020, 12 million older Americans will need long term health care. (HIAA, "A Guide to Long-Term Care Insurance", 2002)

c. State Veterans' Homes Program Renovations:

Daytona HVAC Renovation #12-018: Total Grant: \$2,000,000 -- Federal Funding (65%): \$1,300,000 - State O and M Trust Fund Match (35%): \$700,000. (Completed)

Total Grant Funding -	\$2,000,000.00
Total Grant -	\$1,910,699.49

Land O' Lakes Renovation #12-016: Total Grant: \$2,830,000 -- Federal Funding (65%): \$1,839,500 - State O and M Trust Fund Match (35%): \$990,500. (Completed)

Total Grant Funding -	\$2,830,000.00
Total Grant -	\$2,100,917.15

- d. Volunteer Services: There are a number of registered volunteers in the State Veterans' Homes that provide invaluable services for our veteran residents. The multitude of hours that are contributed add to the quality of life for the residents as well as allow the skilled employees to attend to more complicated, professional level tasks associated with resident care.



Veteran Robert Shivley shows off his pirate costume during the Delta Unit Halloween party at Sims Veteran Nursing Home.



Staff and residents of Baldomero Lopez Veterans' Nursing Home (Land O' Lakes) enjoying themselves during the Thanksgiving festivities.
Mrs. Purdot & Marlies S. with Mr. Averill