

IDAHO VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES

July 15, 2009

Pursuant to agreement, a meeting of the Idaho Veterans Affairs Commission was held in the conference room at the Idaho Division of Veterans Services Offices – Pocatello, Wednesday, July 15, 2009, for the purpose of reviewing program reports and other items of business.

PRESENT: Commissioner, Donald Riegel, Chairman
Commissioner Art Gimpel
Commissioner Mel Napier
Commissioner John Spurny
David Brasuell, Administrator, IDVS
Susan Lowman-Thomas, Human Resource Officer, IDVS
Debbie Spence, Financial Manager, IDVS
Jim Adams, Administrative Support Manager, IDVS
James Roberts, Administrator, IDVH – Boise
Phil Wickliff, Veterans Education Coordinator
Brent Schneider, Administrator, IDVH-Pocatello
Clark Graebel, Administrator, IDVH-Lewiston (attended by telecom)
Tom Ressler, Supervisor, Office of Veterans Advocacy
Zach Rodriguez, Director, Veterans Cemetery
Tammy Hebdon, Administrative Assistant 2, IDVS

Chairman Don Riegel called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS:

Bob Jones, State Commander, Veterans of Foreign Wars—Bob lives in Rexburg and wanted to say hello and thank the Commission for all they do for the Veterans. He will continue to be in touch with the Pocatello Home and the Commission, and will assist in anyway he can.

Steve Allen the Divisions new computer technician was introduced to the Commission.

APPROVAL OF THE APRIL 2009 IDAHO VETERANS AFFAIRS COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES:

Commissioner Spurny made a motion to dispense with the reading of the minutes.
Commissioner Napier seconded. A vote was taken and the minutes were approved as written.

IDAHO DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES HUMAN RESOURCES:

Susan Lowman-Thomas, Senior Human Resource Specialist for the Division provided the Commission with the Human Resources update.

The Division has been able to absorb the FY09 budget constraints without much interruption. The hiring freeze made it necessary to obtain DFM approval for any new hires, as well as for overtime requests, all of which were approved. Although the hiring freeze has been lifted, all new hire requests and overtime requests will still be scrutinized to assure they match the current census.

In an attempt to get state employees more in line with the private industry, beginning this fiscal year all part-time employees will be paying more for their insurance. There is concern that the increase may cause a problem with hiring temporary employees, but that impact is not known yet. The increase will not begin until the first of November.

On a positive note, Susan reported that turnover rates have become almost non-existent. It is believed that this is a direct reflection on the economy, and the need for employees to hold on to the security of their jobs.

Susan thanked the Commission for their input on the new Strategic Plan. In addition to the Commission and IDVS employees, volunteers, families and residents were surveyed, and their input was part of the new plan. As a result, the mission has been shortened, the verbiage has been cleaned up, and new values have been developed:

MISSION: *We are dedicated to serving Idaho's veterans and their families by providing superior advocacy, excellent assistance with benefits and education, high quality long-term care, and respectful interment services in a dignified final resting place.*

VALUES:	Compassion for All	Outstanding Communication
	Unending Accountability	Dignity for Everyone
	Absolute Integrity	Unconditional Honesty

In closing Susan reminded the Commission that marketing is critical to the success of IDVS. Marketing is something we all do, often without thinking about it, and we need to assure the correct message is being relayed. Remember that an employee, residents, families, volunteers, visitors, anyone who comes into one of the Homes is forming an opinion, and will share it with others. It is the job of all to assure that opinion is positive and that the word being shared positively reflects the actions of all who work at, live in, or visit any of the Homes or other branches of the Division of Veterans Services.

IDAHO DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES FINANCIAL REPORT:

Debbie Spence began her report by reiterating Susan's comments about the importance of marketing. The funding for the Homes is greatly impacted by the census, and when that drops there is a negative impact on the entire Division. Adequate marketing work will help keep the census numbers up, as well as continue to allow the Division to operate in a profitable fashion.

The FY09 budget was \$35,428,900, of which \$22,702,958 was spent. The remaining \$12,725,942 includes the \$10,500,000 for the proposed cemetery, so the actual remaining balance at the end of FY09 was \$2,225,942.

The FY10 Appropriation for the Division is \$24,016,900, which does not include any funds to construct a new cemetery. As ordered by DFM and the Governor, personnel funds were reduced by 5%. It is expected to be a very tight fiscal year, so everyone will need to monitor their spending and their budgets very closely.

Since 2003, the General Funds percentage of the Divisions yearly Appropriation has been decreasing. In 2003 the amount was 12.8%, at which time the Division began returning General Funds due to the collection of Medicaid funds. For FY2010, the Divisions overall General Funds percentage is 6.4%.

Preparation has begun on the FY11 Budget and requests have already been submitted. Program Executives have each met with Debbie and Dave to discuss their proposals. Debbie will review the budget request and make whatever changes are necessary. On August 15, 2009, Debbie and Dave will be meeting with DFM to review the entire budget proposal, but Debbie commented that DFM has already informed them to "tighten the belts" and that the economic forecast is not promising at this time. Debbie told the Program Executives to make sure their budget requests are only for items that are truly needed, no extras. Debbie complimented the Program Executives on the work they have done this year, as this years submissions have gone smoother and are better than past years.

As has been discussed in the past, FY12 will begin the Zero Based Budgets, so Debbie and her staff are working towards that and are working with each Program Executive to make sure they are ready as well. This change has been imposed by the Governor, so there is no choice; we will comply. How this will be implemented is still not know, but we have been directed that IDVS will need to be ready for FY12, so we will be ready.

Public Law 109-461 was implemented on May 29, 2009 and is impacting all of the Homes and the Division as a whole. This Law designates the VA as the primary payer for veterans, which means that the Homes must now rebill all claims to the VA, retroactive to March 21, 2007, and begin refunding money that was paid by other sources. The impact of this law is being felt nationwide, and is resulting in many Homes losing large amounts of money. For IDVS, there are eight residents in Boise, one in Lewiston, and two in Pocatello that must be rebilled for and that have money to be refunded. Jim Adams will be discussing this with our congressional delegates and see if they can do something about the way it has been implemented, and NASDVA is already sending their attorney to Washington, DC to look at this law and discuss what can be done to correct it.

POCATELLO VETERANS HOME OPERATIONS REPORT:

Brent Schneider began his report by pointing out some issues with the receipts reporting. Pocatello had an issue with receiving per diem due to the State putting a hold on the account, but that has been corrected. In addition, the May Part A did not get billed on time, causing that receipting to be delayed, but this issue has also been corrected.

Census continues to be an issue for the Pocatello Home, with the past quarter reporting 75%. The addition of Medicare is helping, and Pocatello currently has three Medicare residents with two additional coming within the next week.

The Pocatello Home continues to be a clinical site for the ISU programs. This partnership has been very successful and useful, and has even resulted in some of the students volunteering their own time. This source of volunteers is very valuable as many of the volunteers who have been at the Home for some time are getting older and are not always able to volunteer.

Brent reported that the Home continues to maintain nursing hours at 3.5 hours per patient day, which is what is budgeted, but which requires 34 CNA's who are able to do clinical hours. The Pocatello Home is using other staff members to fill in for absences, which is helping to keep the need for agency hours down, while still keeping overtime to a minimum. Because the staff is willing to help out, Pocatello is able to stay within the budgeted hours and keep costs down.

Marketing is an ongoing concern for Brent and the Pocatello Home. In an effort to educate the medical community of the services and opportunities provided at the Home, Brent has been visiting area physicians, which has resulted in some new residents. One local doctor, Dr. Watkins, has referred two people to the Home and he has been very pleased with what is happening at the Home and the care the residents receive. There has also been some very positive press coverage of events at the home, including Memorial Day events and the annual Easter Egg Hunt. Brent and other staff members have also been attending funerals of past residents which is much appreciated by the family members, have been setting up a booth at the local Job Fair at ISU, and participated in the Field of Hero's.

Brent is also looking at the possibility of opening up a Secured Care Unit on the South End of the Pocatello Home, which would help with the census issue. There has been an increased interest for this service, and because it is not offered at the Pocatello Home these veterans are having to go elsewhere. This is a service that appears to be much needed in the Pocatello area. Staffing and budget issues are the main concerns, and Brent is working to see if these issues can be resolved. Bob Jones, VFW Commander, wanted to know how close to inception this might be. Brent informed him that the number crunching is still going on, but that the outlook is positive. Plans are to absorb the inception into the current budget, but until all the numbers are processed Brent it is not sure if that can happen. Bob also wanted to know who had to approve this, and how long before this service might be available. The approval needed will come from the Division office, and if it is approved, Brent plans to have this service available within the next few months.

Bob also wanted to know if there is anything the veterans groups can do to help with the Census? Brent remarked that helping to get the word out about the Home and the services offered is the best help the Service Organizations can provide. Dave further commented that the support of veteran's organizations is vital to all of the Homes, and any help they could provide would be appreciated. Dave also mentioned that it would be a good idea for those who have not been to one of the Homes to come and tour so they have a better understanding of what services are providing, including the wonderful physical therapy rooms.

The residents continue to enjoy many events and outings, thanks to the dedication of the activities staff. During the past quarter the residents have been to the Dodge Circuit Finals Rodeo, had an Easter Egg Hunt and went on fishing trips, including the annual trip to Twin Falls where they fished with the Boise Home residents.

In closing Brent commented on the value of having many people look over invoices. Thanks to the watchful eye of the staff, a mistake was discovered where the Pocatello Home was charged \$400 for 15 dozen eggs. This was an honest mistake, but because of watchful eyes it was caught immediately and corrected before payment was made.

LEWISTON VETERANS HOME OPERATIONS REPORT:

Clark informed the Commission that he is still having problems with receiving his VA Per Diem; April's came in May, May & June came in June. Receipts have been very slow, and the Spokane VAMC has been very non responsive and difficult to work with. Clark has spoken with the VISN20 coordinator and has been assured that he should see a more rapid return by June. Tom added that there is a new VISN20 Director, so things should be improving.

The Lewiston Home continues to maintain their nursing hours at 3.1 ppd, which allows them to get the job done without extra staff. Clark continues to avoid using agency hours and temporary hours as much as possible, while still providing excellent care.

The Lewiston Home residents also participated in several events during the past quarter, including a bar-b-que with the District 2 VFW members, a medal ceremony for Kevin Keen a WWII veteran who did not receive all of his medals, which Congressman Minnick came and presented the medals, and a very productive fishing trip that resulted in 250 trout being caught and frozen for an August "fish fry" for the residents.

Commissioner Spurny wanted to know what plans were in place for the Homes to deal with the possibility of an H1N1 (swine flue) outbreak. Clark commented that the Lewiston Home has a large amount of Tama flu on hand, but that it does not have a plan in place. James Roberts commented that the Boise Home has vaccine on hand; the nurses have received in-service training on how to respond and what symptoms qualify. Dave Brasuell added that there are protocols in place that come from the Health Districts as well. The Homes are prepared and they will continue to observe the same safe procedures as always: hand washing, stay home if sick, etc. It will also be necessary to monitor volunteers and family members as well.

Commissioner Riegel asked Clark about the memorial that the Lewiston area Gold Star Mothers want to create and how it will be maintained? Clark explained that this type of memorial would require substantial maintenance and that there has not been an offer from anyone to provide the monetary funds necessary. Without someone lined up to maintain the memorial, that responsibility would fall back on the Lewiston Home, which does not have the funds either. Jim Adams commented that the Home is not a memorial grounds, it is a Home for the veterans and that should stay the main focus. And, if the Home were to expand, these memorials would possibly have to be removed. An additional issue with this memorial request is that the group did not contact Clark and discuss it with him; instead they went around Clark, which is very disrespectful. Commissioner Spurny moved that the Commission not support this project; Commissioner Gimpel seconded. Vote was held and the motion passed unanimously. It was

also suggested that some guidelines should be established to handle these types of requests. Dave Brasuell will draft a letter in response to the request, explaining the Commissions decision and suggesting some possible alternative sites.

BOISE VETERANS HOME OPERATIONS REPORT:

Receipts for the Boise Home are doing well: Medicaid is trending down, while Medicare is increasing. There was an issue with receiving the May VA Per Diem, but it did arrive in June, which is why the June receipts are almost double. As the quarterly report indicates, Medicare A is averaging 9.54, which validates the need for this service, and also shows that veterans can now come from the hospital right to a state veteran's home, instead of a private facility, without delay. In addition, Sarah Yoder has been working on Medicare pending accounts and has successfully collected on thirteen of those.

The census trend at the Boise Home seems to be downward. Tracy Shaner, AIT, is working on a ten year trend analysis to help understand why this is happening. The results should be available for the October 2009 Commission meeting. Some of the possible reasons for the decline are the loss of several residents at one time and the DPW projects that caused some rooms to be unavailable. This trend is not expected to continue and James believes that the next quarter will show an increase in census. As a side note, the Domiciliary/Residential care stays at maximum occupancy all the time. Although this unit does not actually make money for the Home, it is an essential service and needs to be available.

Meal costs at the Boise Home appear to be somewhat higher than those at the other Homes, but are standard for the Boise Home. The addition of the new walk in cooler/freezer, which will allow for frozen food donations during the food convoy, should help with food costs. Dan Chandler does an awesome job with quality of food and costs. The Boise IVAL purchased a BBQ on wheels, which is mobile, can be towed by most any truck or car, and is gas powered and very LARGE. This grill will be used extensively to provide bbq opportunities for the residents.

Much like the Pocatello Home, the Boise Home is able to capitalize on clinical nursing students from several different sources. The Apollo College has performed 1022 hours, the BSU interns have performed several hours, and the recent inception of the nursing program at ITT Tech will provide additional hours in the near future. These hours, along with the large amount of volunteer house, are critical to the continued level of care received by the residents.

Nursing hours for Boise have remained constant at 3.5 hrs/ppd. The Boise Home now has one of the strongest nursing manager groups the Home has had in some time, and they are all working well together and doing an outstanding job.

Residents at the Boise Home have also been very busy with outings this past quarter. The Boise Home has been to Stampede Basketball games, the Fat Fenders Car Show with over 100 cars, held a Cinco de Mayo party, had a large Memorial Day BBQ, had a visit from their McCall Pen Pals, went to the Caldwell Air Show, had a tour of Mtn. Home Air Force Base which the residents really enjoyed, Hawks baseball, fishing at Stan's Pond in Middleton where he stocks 20 pound fish with 150 lbs of Elk Chili feed afterwards, participated in the Welcome Home Event at the VAMC, and celebrated six anniversaries and 43 birthdays. Of special note was a visit from Congressman Walt Minnick who came and spent about two hours meeting with and talking to

the residents. What made this special to the residents is that Congressman Minnick did not want to talk to staff, ONLY RESIDENTS.

A Satisfaction Survey was sent out to both residents and family members, and the Boise Home continues to receive very favorable ratings:

Residents: 22 residents responded with a 99% satisfaction—very good rating over all
Family: 88 family members were surveyed with 43 responding and giving a 96% satisfaction rating—excellent rating over all

IDAHO STATE VETERANS CEMETERY OPERATIONS REPORT:

Zach Rodriguez informed the Commission that the Cemetery is also having problems receiving timely payments from the VA, which is indicated by the missing May and June receipts, but that this is a direct result of staffing issues within the VA, and not a fault of the Cemetery staff.

The proposed increase in plot allowance did not make it out of Congress during the last session. This increase is vital to the continued success of the cemetery, as well as for the proposed expansion to a second cemetery in Idaho. The proposed Eastern Idaho Cemetery is contingent on the Boise Cemetery operating in the black, which will be accomplished once the plot allowance is increased. Jim reminded the Commission that everyone needs to contact the legislators and encourage them to work and get the proposed plot allowance increase back on the proposed legislation again this session. Ground for the Eastern Idaho Cemetery has been promised, but progress forward can not happen until Boise begins showing a profit. Commissioner Spurny wanted to know if it would be helpful for the Commission to draft a letter for support for the increase. Jim Adams said that would be very helpful and that he would draft a letter for the Commissioners to sign. Commander Bob Jones would like a copy of Jim's letter so that he can work with the Veterans groups to propose and send a like letter.

The Cemetery staff has been doing a weather study as a way to help plan and staff. The study has reinforced the knowledge that colder, rainy months (April) show a decline in scheduled services, while warmer, dryer months (June, July) show an increase in services. This information allows for better scheduling of training and vacations, while still providing the necessary staffing to provide the services family members request.

In closing Zach provided a wonderful slide presentation on the past year at the Cemetery—honoring all of the wonderful things done at the Cemetery, those lost and honored through the MIA and the Memorial Day services and an overview of the beautiful, respectful, honorary grounds.

OFFICE OF VETERANS ADVOCACY OPERATIONS REPORT:

The OVA Qtrly Bulletin is now available on line, and Tom Ressler asked for anyone wanting and not receiving the Bulletin to please contact Jennel Binsky (jennel.binsky@veterans.idaho.gov). The updated Directory is also available on line.

With the economy issues, the Office of Veterans Advocacy continues to see an upturn in client interviews and requests for increase in benefits. New home loans and refinancing are the most

common request currently. Fortunately there is a Denver representative in the Boise Office, (Kim) who deals with these issues, which allows Tom to refer the veteran to an actual person.

Hearings also continue to rise, and this is partly due to increase in VA video hearings, as well as having the travel board come to Boise.

Tom reported that the Emergency Grant Fund was not depleted this year; the year ended with a \$7000 balance in the fund. This was a surprise, as the economy conditions continue to decline, and Tom is not entirely sure why this happened. One explanation may be that so much was needed that the \$1000 maximum allowed was just not enough, so applications were not made. Commander Bob Jones asked what this program was. Tom explained that this is a one time, \$1000 life time maximum, grant that can be used to help cover expenses associated with a catastrophic event. There is an application that must be filed, and some necessary documentation to substantiate the need, and if all conditions are met a check is issued. In addition, Tom mentioned that the VFW and the American Legion both have programs which can also be used.

There is also a new program that can help ease some of the financial hardships for the veterans. Brave Heart is a grant program that is administered through the Idaho Veterans Assistance League (IVAL) and a Board, and is available to any honorably discharged veteran living in Idaho. The maximum grant amount is \$500, and the application process has a quick turnaround time.

This is the time of year when the training expenses for OVA are increased. This is due in part to the yearly two day training retreat that all OVA members attend. This retreat is designed to build camaraderie and increase communications, provided updated training, and build a more cohesive working group. This years training featured Vincent Katuku, a motivational speaker, who came and delivered a wonderful message about balance between work and home. Mr. Katuku is very motivational and his message was well received.

State Service Officers Milt Smith and Kevin Hammond will be leaving for AL National training in Annapolis in July. In September/October, the remaining nine service officers will attend the same training. The training is normally paid for by the VFW, but due to the economic conditions, they are only able to pay for two attendees this year. Tom has worked with Debbie Spence and determined that the OVA budget is able to fund the remaining attendees without a negative financial impact. This training is essential and allows the service officers to continue providing updated critical information to the veterans they serve. In addition, the Idaho service officers always score above the national average on the test at the end of the training, making them some of the best in the nation.

The 2009 Service Officer School will be held August 26-28th, at the DoubleTree Inn in Boise. For this years conference it was decided to not spend money to bring in outside experts, but instead to focus on basics and use local VA staff. An additional change will be in the BBQ that has been held at VFW Post 63 in the past, but this year will be held at the Boise Veterans Home, allowing the attendees to mingle and eat with the veterans. The attendees were also treated to a visit to the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery, a first for many.

The day following the Service Officers School will be the first Idaho Women Veterans Conference. This conference will also be held at the DoubleTree, which has helped to decrease

the costs. A.K. Linehart-Minnick will be the MC, and First Lady Lori Otter has been invited to attend as well. The Commissioners have been asked to vote on the Female Veteran of the Year, which will be awarded at the opening ceremonies. A tribute and recognition to Carrie French, the first female Idaho veteran to lose her life in Iraq will also be given.

At the 2009 VFW State Convention, Debbie Harmon, State Service Officer, was recognized as the female VFW Veteran of the Year.

EDUCATION:

Dave Brasuell introduced and welcomed Phil Wickliff who is coming to IDVS from Technical Education as a result of changes in legislation and how Governor Otter wants services arranged. Phil is in charge of the Education Benefits for veterans, and helps administer the G.I. Bill.

Phil explained he is responsible for all Idaho GI Bill approvals and that he travels throughout the state to observe and approve colleges, On-the-Job Training programs, apprenticeships, Technical School, etc. When an educational facility agrees to train a veteran, Phil assures they have qualified staff to train, have a physical spot to train and then signs a contract outlining the responsibilities. Currently there are 54 schools approved in Idaho, with BSU the largest with 1100 veterans and 400-500 at each UofI and ISU.

August 1, 2009 is the inception date for the new GI Bill. This version is not equitable to each veteran as it is based on actual costs for the state the veteran attends school, which differs from state to state. The costs considered are those necessary to achieve the degree, the type of program fees particular to that program only, cost of living, and many others. Many of these fees will vary depending on the location of the facility, so it will be necessary for the program to be monitored and adjusted to achieve better equality.

An additional flaw with the new GI Bill is that it no longer covers On-the-Job Training, apprenticeships, trade schools or flight schools. Under the current GI Bill these programs are covered and veterans who implement their GI Bill prior to August 1, 2009 will still have these types of programs covered. It is critical that all veterans understand their options so if they want to pay into the old program which offers the OJT, apprenticeships, flight and trade schools, they have that option.

DIVISION OF VETERANS SERVICES OPERATIONS REPORT:

DAVID BRASUELL, Administrator:

The Division office has been very busy the past quarter addressing the economy and budget issues, attending veterans organizations conventions (VFW, AL, DAV, MOPH), and assuring the veterans are taken care of.

The Memorial Day 2009 Ceremony at the Idaho State Veterans Cemetery was very successful. Committee members Zach Rodriguez, Jim Adams, Phil Hawkins, and Tom Ressler put together a

wonderful program, with very positive feedback. There are still a few things to work through, but the event is getting much better.

Plans are in the works to update the Memorial Pamphlet over the next year. Digital pictures are needed, so as Commission members are traveling around the state, if they take or find any appropriate pictures Dave asked that they email/send them to Tammy or Jennel. Susan Thompson will be working on this project.

Gen. LaFranz was contacted by Senator Kempthorn about some battlefield soil he has and wanted to know what we wanted to do with the dirt. Dave sent him a letter asking what he had in mind, how much, etc. and is still waiting to hear back from him.

Commission on Aging sponsored an Aging Symposium for those providing services to the aging population. The main focus of the Symposium was to identify ways to keep the elderly in their homes as long as possible. Dave, Susan, members from the VA Regional Office, OVA Members, Gwen Thornfelt, Social Worker-Boise Home, and Sarah Yoder comprised a team that provided information on what services are provided by the Division on a whole (OVA, Homes, Cemetery, etc.).

A new amendment to the Idaho Open Meeting Law went into effect this year, so it will be very important for the Commission to be careful when going into Executive Session. It is important to remember that all meeting announcements must be posted in public places, the Agenda for each meeting must be posted and if it is an Amended Agenda, that must be noted, must have a justified reason to enter into an Executive Session, during which communication must only address the stated reason for entering into Executive Session-no other topics can be discussed. As there are fines for violating these rules, it is recommended that all decisions to enter into Executive Session be ran past Julie Weaver, DAG, for advice and proper posting.

Rep. Jaquet has contacted Dave about money for a memorial. Dave has been working with Rep. Jaquet and has informed her that the Division does not have money for these projects, but that they will help in other ways as needed. Tom mentioned that he has spoken to the Veterans Group behind this memorial and has informed them that the county has money, but that there is a process they must follow to obtain these funds. Tom suggested they contact their county for assistance.

JIM ADAMS, Administrative Support Manager:

The Disabled Veterans Hunting program has been approved and the first hunt will take place in November. The application process is open, and currently the Division has received three, but expect more. The goal of this program is to provide hunting trips for two veterans who are disabled, who used to hunt and now, due to military injury, cannot. The expenses for this hunt are covered entirely by the provider, including those that may be necessary so that a hunter's caretaker/family member can attend to assist. Application deadline is August 31, 2009, after which the committee will review the application and make the choices.

As of July 1st, Gold Star License Plates are now available. All applicants must receive an approval form from the Division that must be signed by Dave, Jim or Tammy. The application

for the plates and the approval form are both available on the web page www.idaho.vetearns.gov

This tax year the Division launched the State Tax Return Veterans Fund check off. In order for this donation option to continue \$25,000 in donations had to be received in one of the first two years. To date, the Division has been notified that this fund has received in excess of \$40,000. An application for use of these funds is being developed and should be ready in the next couple of weeks.

Every year the Cemetery encounters a need for chairs, and the difficulty in obtaining them at an affordable rate. Carol Dalton, Mtn. Home American Legion Auxiliary, happened to be at the Cemetery this year as Tates Rents was dropping off the chairs for the Memorial Day Ceremony, and was appalled that the Cemetery did not have their own chairs. As a result, Carol presented Zach with a \$1000 check from the Mtn. Home American Legion Auxiliary to purchase chairs, and the Eagle American Legion Auxiliary and Dee Collins donated an additional \$500; the Cemetery now has their own chairs, and a trailer to store them on.

As mentioned previously, the Brave Heart program is up and running strong. Mr. Borbonus, father of an Idaho Veteran, held a golf tournament and raised \$10,000, which was donated to this fund. In addition, the Sorrento Cheese Factory also committed to donating \$10,000. These funds will be used to help Idaho veterans who have fallen on hard financial times and need some assistance. Grants from this program will be limited to \$500.

The Divisions IT department has come a long way in the past two years, and is almost at the point where all equipment is updated enough to allow for a three year turnover rotation. In the past, all computer equipment has been covered under a very expensive maintenance program, which was seldom used and became dead money. This rotation will allow those computers that are no longer covered by the manufactures warranty (at no cost to the Division) to be rotated out and replaced by newer machines.

The Cemetery is working on the Expansion Grant which will be used to enlarge the Columbarium Wall, install curbing to stop people from driving on the grass and damaging sprinklers and asphalt repairs. Zach is going to training on writing these grants, which should make the process more effective and shorter in duration.

OLD BUSINESS:

There was no old business to discuss.

NEW BUSINESS:

Gary Bermeosolo, Administrator Nevada Veterans Home, sent a marketing CD for Jim and Dave to review. This is a marketing option that Jim and Dave have been discussing, but the cost has prohibited them from proceeding. However, the Veterans Fund money may be an avenue that could be used to fund the CD's. As this is an excellent way to promote the Division and the Cemetery, Jim, Dave, Susan and others will begin working on the CD. Susan has asked Patti

Murphy, Division PR representative, to gather some bids and information. As this project progresses, updates will be provided.

Commissioner Riegel announced that Commissioner Ken Pitcher is stepping down from his position due to health issues. Commissioner Riegel asked Commissioner Mel Napier if he would be willing to serve as the Commission Vice-Chair, which he accepted. It was further suggested that a formal recognition for all the years serving as a Service Officer, as well as a Commissioner, be prepared for Commissioner Pitcher, to be presented at a later date.

Commissioner Gimpel informed the Commission that he has several tubes of Black Sand from Iwo Jima and anyone wanting some is welcome to have it; just let him know.

The next Commission meeting will be held October, 21, 2009 in Boise.

As there was no further business, Commissioner Spurny moved that the meeting be adjourned; Commissioner Gimpel seconded the motion.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Don Riegel, Chairman

David Brasuell, Executive Secretary