

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS SERVICES

COMMISSIONER'S 2008 ANNUAL REPORT

TO

GOVERNOR TIMOTHY M. KAINE

AND

THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

December 11, 2008



Serving those who served.

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Commissioner's Message

I take great pride in submitting this annual report on behalf of the men and women of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS). We are privileged to serve those who stood on the front line of freedom. From Omaha Beach to the mountains of Afghanistan, from the Fulda Gap to the Korean DMZ, Virginia's veterans have earned the lasting tribute of a grateful nation and Commonwealth. It is the mission of DVS to ensure that these honored veterans receive the benefits, support, quality care, and recognition they have earned through service and sacrifice.

Approximately 814,000 veterans call Virginia home and represent more than 10 percent of Commonwealth's population. I am pleased to report that in fiscal year 2008 (FY08) DVS continued to make substantial progress in serving Virginia's veterans. In FY08, the agency:

- Improved the financial security of Virginia's veterans by filing 22,736 disability compensation claims, more than a six percent increase over FY07. Approximately 63 percent of these claims were approved by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Provided greater access to post-secondary educational opportunities by increasing the number of approved educational programs from 780 in FY07 to 898 in FY08.
- Opened a second care center, the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) in Richmond. In total, the agency provided 87,120 patient days of care at SBVCC and the Virginia Veterans Care Center in Roanoke.
- Served the memorial needs of Virginia's veterans by performing 804 burials at Virginia's two state veterans cemeteries, nearly a nine percent increase over FY07.

These great strides would not have been possible without the strong, bi-partisan support of the executive and legislative branches of our government; without the guidance of the Board of Veterans Services, the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations, and the Veterans Services Foundation; and, especially, without the forceful advocacy of Virginia's veterans. DVS will continue to work with this broad-based coalition to better meet the needs of Virginia's veterans.

Fiscal year 2009 marks the sixth year of operation for the Department of Veterans Services. A year from now, I look forward to reporting to you on the operation the agency's core functions, progress on implementation of the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program, continued implementation of recommendations in the EO 19 report to Governor Kaine, development of an electronic claims processing system, and the continued delivery of quality service to our veterans.

Vincent M. Burgess
Commissioner

Comments from the Chairman, Board of Veterans Services

As I look back on 2008, I am proud of how much we have accomplished. The Department of Veterans Services, in concert with the Board of Veterans Services and its sister boards, continues to make great strides in serving Virginia's veterans. However, my pride is tempered by how much remains to be done – efforts that have been hampered by the faltering economy. In last year's report, I included the comment of a veteran Virginia delegate: "so many veterans, so much need, so few dollars." I think that statement sums up our current situation very succinctly.

Despite the worsening budget situation, the 2008 General Assembly launched a major new initiative to serve Virginia's veterans – the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP). A top priority of the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (the JLC), the VWWP will fill a critical in care for our wounded warriors. I am encouraged by the progress the Veterans Services Foundation is making to raise private funds in support of this worthy cause, with \$50,000 being raised to date.

I wish I could report that the TurboVet initiative had received a similar level of support, but state's budget situation meant that only \$100,000 was appropriated to continue development of the system, an amount that has subsequently been reduced to \$50,000. The JLC has made the TurboVet system a top priority for the 2009 session, and I am confident that when sufficient resources are available, the Commonwealth will take the lead on developing and deploying a system that is light years ahead of the current method of preparing and filing veterans' disability claims. I am confident, too, that when the budget situation improves, the Department will receive the budget resources necessary to fill the Benefit Services positions that had to be cut, or left unfilled, because of the current budget situation.

A quick overview of other Department programs shows more cause for optimism. A ceremony was held in September to transfer almost 80 acres of land from the Army to the Commonwealth of Virginia for the construction of the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Dublin. An architect has been selected, the project is on track for federal grant funding, and the cemetery is expected to be operational by the end of 2010. The Board will continue to be involved with the state's cemeteries, with a focus on such issues as the Missing in America Project and pre-installed burial vaults.

The Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC) accepted its first residents in January, and a recent census showed that the facility had an 80% occupancy rate. The SBVCC expects to be at 90% or greater by the end of February 2009. The 2008 General Assembly authorized the Department of Veterans Services to apply for federal grant funding for the Commonwealth's fourth veterans care center, to be located in Northern Virginia. Two projects are already on the federal grant list – the SBVCC addition and the Hampton Roads center.

In summary then, much is being done to serve Virginia's veterans, but we need to do much more. When the state budget situation improves, I know we will see a new infusion of resources to support Virginia's 814,000 veterans.

Paul E. Galanti, Chairman

Board of Veterans Services—as of December 1, 2008

Paul E. Galanti – Chairman
Thad A. Jones – Vice Chairman
John A. Anderson
Delegate Mark L. Cole
Delegate M. Kirkland Cox
Paris Davis
Senator John S. Edwards
J. Pat Green
Samuel Metters
Senator Toddy Puller
J.W. Peyton Robertson
Al Sample
Bettye H. Simmons
S. Judson Stanley
Max W. Taylor
Delegate Vivian E. Watts
Daniel D. Boyer, *ex officio*
Frank G. Wickersham, III, *ex officio*
Vincent M. Burgess, *ex officio*

Comments from the Chairman, Joint Leadership Council

I. VETERANS' ISSUES

The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) has become the voice of the veterans of Virginia. Representing over 250,000 members, the 23 veterans service organizations (VSOs) of the JLC have joined together to let our policy makers know issues which are of most concern to the veteran and military communities of the Commonwealth. As we have matured as a Council, policy makers have become aware of who we are and what we do. We believe the broad range of military experience represented by our VSO members enables the JLC to best represent veterans' issues for Virginia's 814,000 veterans.

II. LEGISLATIVE OBJECTIVES

The JLC receives grass-roots input from its member VSOs. Then Council members carefully research the issues, debate them, and after much discussion, vote on whether to adopt them as JLC legislative objectives. The JLC is very mindful that recommendations made to the Governor and the General Assembly must be reasonable, justified, and well articulated. We are also very aware that we are dealing with limited resources, and we carefully distinguish between those items that are "must haves" for veterans and those that would be "nice to have."

III. A MOST EFFECTIVE ADVOCATE

Armed with our legislative agenda and accompanying position papers, members of JLC's veteran organizations began contacting their delegates and senators in September to begin advocating for the JLC agenda. All members of the different VSOs (e.g. American Legion, VFW, MOAA, etc.) have been meeting with their legislators and all have been advocating for the same objectives. All of the VSOs represented on the JLC are speaking with one voice! While the JLC "supports" all legislation beneficial to veterans and the military community, it advocates most strongly for the legislative agenda that has been agreed to by all its members.

IV. ADVICE TO THE GOVERNOR

In addition to advocating with the General Assembly, the JLC has coordinated and worked with all other governmental boards to advise on veteran/military issues. In fact, the JLC has been the leader in promoting a legislative agenda with agencies such as the Board of Veterans Services (BVS), the Virginia Citizen-Soldier Support Council (VCSSC), the Virginia Military Advisory Council (VMAC), and the Veteran Services Foundation (VSF).

Respectfully,

Daniel D. Boyer
Colonel, USAF (Ret)
Chairman

 Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations – as of December 1, 2008

Veterans Service Organization	JLC Member	Alternate
Air Force Association	Mason S. Botts	Jeff Platte
American Ex-Prisoners of War	Robert O. Gray	George Coker
American Legion	Cornelius T. O'Neill	Dale Chapman
AMVETS	Jim Aucoin	John R. Cooper
Association of the United States Army	Samuel D. Wilder, Jr.	Philip Stoneman
Disabled American Veterans	Daniel T. Miller	David K. Martinez
Fleet Reserve Association	Thomas J. Snee	
Korean War Veterans Association	John J. Dozier	James P. Jones, Jr.
Legion of Valor of the US, Inc.	Richard J. Rinaldo	William Weise
Marine Corps League	John C. Bonnell, Jr.	Bruce Steeley
Military Order of the Purple Heart	Norman J. Jasper, Jr.	
Military Order of the World Wars	Williams Townsley	Earl Johnson
MOAA	Wes Edwards	Don Kaiserman
NAUS	David A. Ellis	Paul Hamaker
Navy Seabee Veterans of America		
Non Commissioned Officers Association	Richard C. Schneider	
Paralyzed Veterans of America	John T. Jackson	David R. Coffield
Reserve Officers Association	Thomas M. Stephen, Jr.	Carmen D. Gentile
Roanoke Valley Veterans Council	Frank L. Sherman	Dan Karnes
Veterans of Foreign Wars	Daniel Boyer	Kim A. DeShano
Virginia National Guard Association	Michael Coleman	John D. Velleca
WAVES	Michala Smith	Mary Freeman
Women Marines Association	Jenny Holbert	Marie Juliano
Chairman, Board of Veterans Services, <i>ex officio</i>	Paul Galanti	Thad Jones
Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation, <i>ex officio</i>	Frank Wickersham, III	Leroy Gross
Commissioner of Veterans Services, <i>ex officio</i>	Vincent Burgess	

Comments from the Chairman, Veterans Services Foundation

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) made significant strides in organizational development and fund raising in support of Department of Veterans Services' (DVS) programs and services during 2008.

During the latter part of November 2007, VSF gained the support of the Governor and several legislators to sponsor legislative changes that the VSF Board of Trustees (the Trustees) had endorsed. The initiatives were designed to clarify VSF's status and responsibilities, and to build capacity to exercise oversight of the Veterans Services Fund (the Fund) and conduct fund raising in support of Virginia's veterans.

Legislative initiatives for 2008 included having the Chairmen of the Foundation and Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations serve as *ex officio* members of each other's boards. They also clarified DVS's role serving Virginia's veterans and members of the Armed Forces Reserve and National Guard, and supported strengthening the VSF Trustees by adding eight additional citizen members and making board appointments effective for four years. In addition, legislation clarified the role and purpose of the Foundation as a body politic and corporate to administer the Fund, provide funds in support of DVS programs, and raise revenue.

Legislation created the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP), which became a reality on July 1, 2008. The legislation made Foundation fund raising support for the Program a top priority. Efforts to raise funds for the VWWP started early in the year and gained momentum through various fund raising initiatives to meet the FY09 goal of raising \$150,000 in contributions as specified in the 2008 Appropriation Act. In support of fund raising, a Foundation brochure was published along with a VWWP information sheet and pledge card.

The VSF has begun work on a strategic plan. The Foundation's Development Committee has drafted a branding and outreach plan and is developing a fund raising program. The Foundation's Finance Committee is engaged in establishing Fund integrity, refining VSF policies, and clarifying the Trustees' relationship with the Department of Veterans Services.

Frank G. Wickersham, III
Chairman of the Board of Trustees
Veterans Services Foundation

Veterans Services Foundation – as of December 1, 2008

Frank G. Wickersham, III – Board Chair

Leroy P. Gross – 1st Vice-Chair

Kathleen Wilder – 2nd Vice-Chair

Robert A. Archer

Supriya Christopher

Juanita Farrow

Donald L. Hall

Adam Harrell, Sr.

William M. Lechler

Frederic H. Leigh

David N. Richardson

Meade A. Spotts

Leo C. Wardrup, Jr.

Randall L. West

Daniel D. Boyer, *ex officio*

Paul E. Galanti, *ex officio*

Vincent M. Burgess, *ex officio*

Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

Serve Virginia's veterans and their dependents by ensuring they receive the benefits, support, quality care, and recognition they have earned through service and sacrifice

Vision

Become the benchmark for the delivery of quality veterans programs at the state level and help ensure Virginia veterans receive the federal benefits to which they are entitled

Values

- **Service:** *Deliver the best service possible to Virginia veterans – they deserve no less*
- **Dedication:** *Bring an unflinching commitment to helping all of Virginia's veterans*
- **Excellence:** *Continually strive to be the best at what we do*
- **Involvement:** *Involve all stakeholders – veterans, veterans service organizations, department staff, policy makers, and legislators – in developing and implementing top flight veterans programs*
- **Innovation:** *Constantly seek new and/or better ways to deliver service to our veterans*
- **Openness and honesty:** *Deal with all stakeholders in a direct and sincere manner*
- **Accountability:** *Create a climate of ownership at the lowest level possible*
- **Flexibility:** *Encourage our front-line managers to use their initiative and experience to accomplish the mission*

Department Overview

Since 1942, Virginia has shown its respect and honor to veterans by serving them as effective advocates. Prior to 2003, veterans services in Virginia were fragmented among the former Department of Veterans Affairs, which operated the benefits and cemeteries programs; the Virginia Veterans Care Center, which was operated by a series of contractors under the supervision of a Board of Trustees; and the Department of Education, which oversaw the activities of the State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training. In 2003, these services were consolidated under one agency, known as the Department of Veterans Services (DVS).

DVS is organized into four service delivery branches – benefits, veterans education, care centers, and cemeteries – plus an administrative section. Integral components of the Department of Veterans Services team are the Board of Veterans Services, the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations, the Veterans Services Foundation, and the Veterans Care Center Advisory Committee, which all work collaboratively to support the effective delivery of services to Virginia's veterans.

The Benefit Services section assists veterans and their dependents in obtaining compensation and pension benefits from the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs. DVS operates 21 field offices throughout the Commonwealth.

The State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training (SAA) reviews and approves post-secondary education programs operating in the Commonwealth, ensuring the programs meet strict federal qualification guidelines. Veterans may use their G.I. Bill and other educational benefits only at programs approved by the SAA.

The Virginia Veterans Care Center, located adjacent to the Salem VA Medical Center, is a 240-bed facility that provides long-term skilled care and assisted living services to veterans. The Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center, located adjacent to the McGuire VA Medical Center, is a 160-bed facility that provides long-term skilled care to veterans.

Virginia's veterans cemeteries provide burial and perpetual care services to veterans and eligible dependents. The Virginia Veterans Cemetery, in Amelia, is a 127-acre facility. The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery, in Suffolk, is a 74-acre facility.

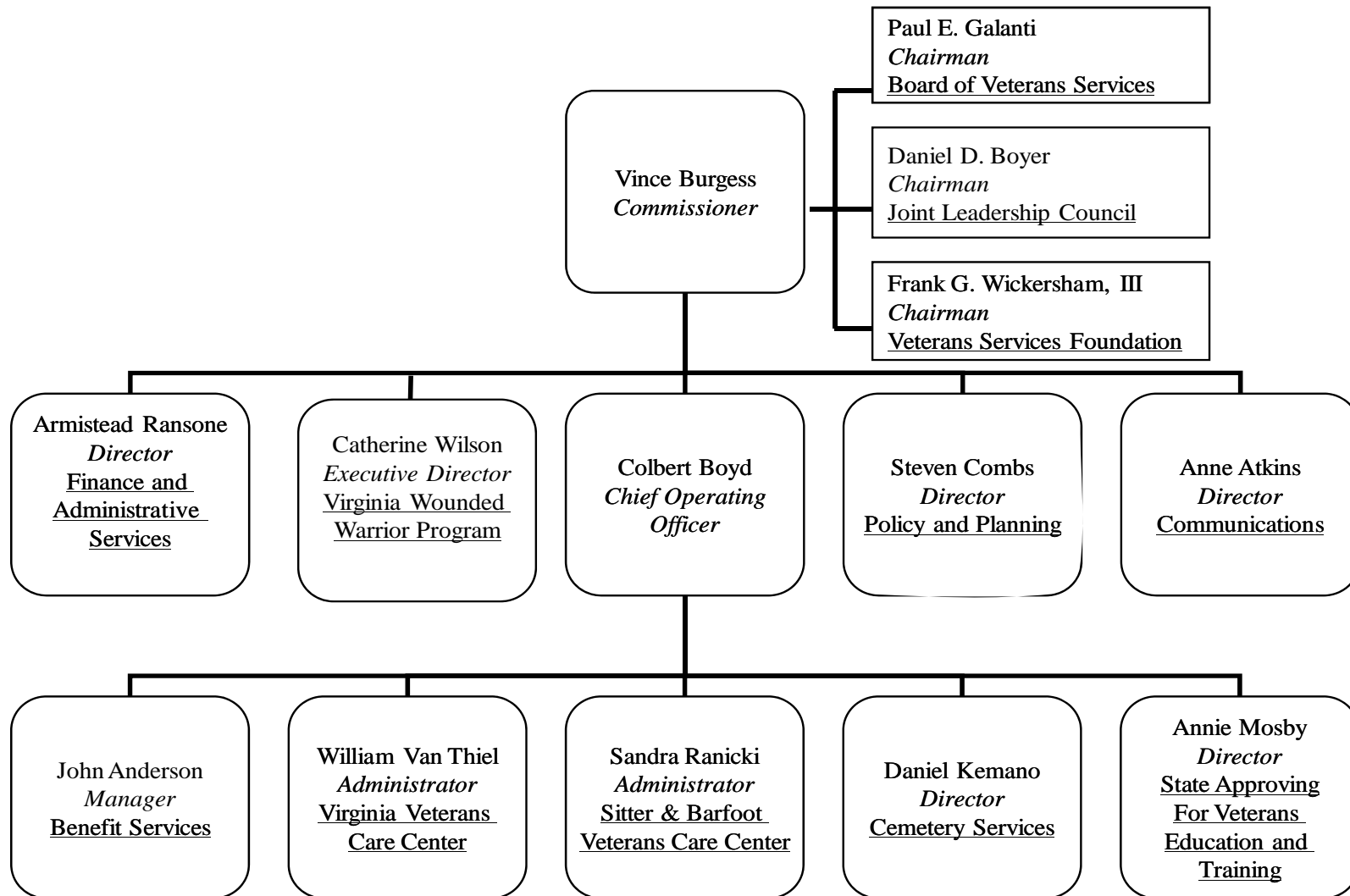
The Board of Veterans Services (BVS) is responsible for formulating policies, developing procedures, reviewing department budget submissions, and making recommendations for the efficient and effective delivery of veterans services, as well as studying all matters affecting the welfare of Virginia's veterans.

The Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) advises DVS on matters of concern to veterans and their families.

The Veterans Services Foundation (VSF) is responsible for administering the Veterans Services Fund and for working with the agency to identify additional revenue sources for veterans programs.

The Veterans Care Center Advisory Committee advises the DVS commissioner on matters pertaining to the administration of veterans care centers.

**Virginia Department of Veterans Services
Organization as of November 1, 2008**



Benefits Services

Mission

Assist Virginia's veterans and their dependents in obtaining benefits to which they are entitled under federal, state, and local laws.

Services and Organization

The federal government, through the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), provides many benefits and services to those who served this nation in times of war and peace. Among these benefits and services are compensation for service-connected disability or death, income-based pensions, medical care, educational benefits, and home purchase assistance.

The Benefits Services section of DVS assists Virginia's veterans in gaining access to the benefits to which they are entitled through their service and sacrifice. While veterans service representatives (claims agents) are able to help many veterans over the phone, much of the assistance takes place at a field office or itinerant contact point. During these face-to-face contacts, veterans service representatives guide veterans through the myriad steps required to file a USDVA claim.

Developing a solid claim is more than a matter of completing the application. Supporting documents, sometimes decades old, must be retrieved from federal and state archives. The process is labor-intensive. A veterans service representative may spend an hour visiting with a veteran, but then spend 20 hours or more finding records and completing the necessary supporting documentation. All of this hard work pays off if the USDVA approves the claim.

In FY2008, the Benefit Services section operated 21 field offices across the Commonwealth, in Accomac, Alexandria, Amelia, Big Stone Gap, Bristol, Cedar Bluff, Charlottesville, Danville, Front Royal, Hampton, Lynchburg, Norfolk (2 offices), Quantico, Roanoke, South Hill, Staunton, and Wytheville, plus offices co-located at each of the three VA Medical Centers in Virginia (McGuire, Salem and Hampton VAMCs).

The field offices were staffed by 36 full-time veterans service representatives, 19 full-time administrative assistants. Service areas are detailed in Table 1. The number of veterans service representatives and administrative assistants assigned to each field office depends on available resources and the number of veterans expected to be served.

In addition to serving veterans at the 21 field offices, the Benefit Services section also assists veterans at itinerant service points. The itinerant service points are, in effect, satellite field offices, with space provided by federal, state, and local government agencies and private organizations, including veterans service organizations like the Veterans of Foreign Wars and American Legion. Because the organizations often provide the space at no charge, the itinerant service points allow DVS to reach and serve a greater number of veterans without incurring the cost of fixed operating facilities. Beginning July 1, 2005, all veterans service representatives were required to provide itinerant service at least one day per week.

The Benefit Services section is headed by the benefits services manager, who is assisted by district managers who provide guidance and supervision to the field offices. The benefits services manager, three district managers, and claims examiners also provide assistance during the claims appeals process. Finally, the Benefit Services section maintains an office in Washington, D.C. to represent clients before the Board of Veterans Appeals, part of the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.

Resources

	FY07	FY08	FY09
Budget	\$3,213,454	\$3,415,343	\$3,582,901
Authorized Positions	58	69	69

Activities

The Benefits Services section helped Virginia veterans file 22,736 claims in FY08, of which 63.4 percent were approved by the USDVA. If approved by the USDVA, a claim results in two types of awards: monthly compensation based on the level of disability and a retroactive award back to the claim date.

While most retroactive (or retro) awards are relatively small, some exceed \$50,000 and can even reach the six-figure level. Forty-nine retro awards exceeded \$50,000 in FY08, for a total value of \$3.95 million. Nine awards exceeded \$100,000 for a total value of \$1.31 million. In FY08, a total of 2,139 retro awards for Virginia veterans were approved by the USDVA, representing almost \$22 million. Claims activity is shown in Tables 2 and 3.

Veterans service representatives and administrative assistants had 137,093 contacts with Virginia veterans in FY08. This number does not reflect the number of individual veterans served, since individual veterans often have multiple contacts with veterans service representatives, but gives an indication of the level of contact the section has with veterans. Sixty-one percent of the contacts took place over the phone, 33 percent occurred in one of the 21 field offices, with the remaining six percent taking place at one of the itinerant service points. Contact activity is shown in Tables 4 and 5.

As noted above, helping a veteran file a claim can be a lengthy process. Thirty minutes spent with a veteran during a walk-in visit may translate to several hours spent gathering necessary documents and completing required forms. Though some phone contacts can be handled rather quickly, such as a referral to another office or source of information, most involve questions about pending claims or possible entitlement to benefits. While inquires into the status of pending claims may require little time with the client, significant time is often required to obtain a response from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. A five-minute phone conversation with a veteran can easily translate into thirty minutes or more spent obtaining the information the veteran has requested.

If a phone call concerns possible entitlement to federal benefits, the complexity of benefit eligibility rules means that a veterans service representative can spend significant time on the phone with a client obtaining the information necessary to determine potential eligibility. Frequently, a veterans service

representative will complete the entire claims process over the phone and through the mail, as some clients are in poor health or lack the transportation needed to reach a field office or itinerant point.

A comparison between FY07 and FY08 shows an increase in client contacts in FY08—135,378 in FY07 versus 137,093 in FY08, more than a one percent increase. The number of claims filed on behalf of Virginia's veterans also increased in FY08, with 22,736 claims filed in FY08 versus 21,303 filed in FY07, more than a six percent increase.

In FY08, veterans services representatives visited 76 different itinerant locations and made 7,026 contacts with veterans during those visits.

Table 1**Benefit Services Section Field Office Service Area – FY2008**

<u>Field Office</u>	<u>Counties Served</u>	<u>Cities Served</u>
Accomac	Accomack and Northampton	
Alexandria	Arlington and Fairfax	Alexandria
Amelia	Amelia, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Essex, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, King and Queen, King William, Lancaster, New Kent, Middlesex, Powhatan, Prince George, Richmond, and Surry	Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Petersburg and Richmond
Big Stone Gap	Dickenson, Lee, Scott and Wise	Norton
Bristol	Russell, Scott, Smyth, and Washington; Sullivan, TN	Bristol, VA and Bristol, TN
Cedar Bluff	Buchanan, Russell, and Tazewell	
Charlottesville	Albemarle, Culpeper, Fluvanna, Greene, Louisa, Madison, Nelson, and Orange	Charlottesville
Danville	Henry, Patrick, and Pittsylvania	Danville
Fairfax	Fairfax and Loudoun	Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park
Front Royal	Clarke, Fauquier, Frederick, Page, Rappahannock, Shenandoah, and Warren	Winchester
Hampton and Hampton VA Medical Center	Charles City, Gloucester, Isle of Wight, James City, Mathews, and York	Hampton, Newport News, Poquoson, and Williamsburg

Lynchburg	Amherst, Appomattox, Bedford, Buckingham and Campbell	Bedford and Lynchburg
McGuire VA Medical Center (Richmond)	Amelia, Chesterfield, Cumberland, Dinwiddie, Essex, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, King and Queen, King William, Lancaster, New Kent, Middlesex, Powhatan, Prince George, Richmond, and Surry	Colonial Heights, Hopewell, Petersburg, and Richmond
Norfolk	Southampton and Sussex	Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach
Quantico	Arlington, Caroline, King George, Northumberland, Prince William, Spotsylvania, Stafford, and Westmoreland	Fredericksburg
Roanoke	Alleghany, Botetourt, Buchanan, Craig, Floyd, Franklin, Henry, Patrick, Pulaski, and Roanoke	Covington, Martinsville, and Roanoke
Salem VA Medical Center	Henry, Patrick, Moneta	Collinsville, Salem
South Hill	Brunswick, Charlotte, Greensville, Halifax, Lunenburg, Mecklenburg, Nottoway, Prince Edward, Southampton, and Sussex	Emporia and South Boston
Staunton	Augusta, Bath, Highland, Rockbridge, and Rockingham	Buena Vista, Harrisonburg, Lexington, Staunton, and Waynesboro
Tidewater (Norfolk)	Southampton and Sussex	Chesapeake, Franklin, Norfolk, Portsmouth, Suffolk, and Virginia Beach

Wytheville

Bland, Carroll, Giles, Grayson,
Montgomery, Pulaski, Smyth
and Wythe

Galax, Hillsville, Radford, and
Wytheville

Table 2
Claims Submitted to USDVA - Sorted by Month

MONTH	NEW			REOPEN			21-8416			EVR			TOTAL CLAIMS		
	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08
JULY	1,167	1,326	1,329	208	365	384	16	37	25	7	14	6	1,398	1,742	1,744
AUGUST	1,208	1,393	1,543	300	380	433	15	16	29	7	13	4	1,530	1,802	2,009
SEPTEMBER	1,065	1,324	1,299	239	343	367	19	23	21	6	10	6	1,329	1,700	1,693
OCTOBER	1,136	1,348	1,281	227	360	375	18	17	15	21	16	3	1,402	1,741	1,674
NOVEMBER	1,057	1,181	1,207	284	315	387	38	23	30	15	14	9	1,394	1,533	1,633
DECEMBER	1,026	1,014	1,104	255	292	306	42	34	46	15	8	12	1,338	1,348	1,468
JANUARY	1,462	1,301	1,547	345	358	504	532	428	349	280	231	176	2,619	2,318	2,576
FEBRUARY	1,331	1,181	1,456	336	320	417	393	320	278	230	190	168	2,290	2,011	2,319
MARCH	1,546	1,453	1,513	380	347	425	154	65	95	58	65	42	2,138	1,977	2,075
APRIL	1,356	1,232	1,511	262	328	417	69	55	66	28	17	28	1,715	1,632	2,022
MAY	1,213	1,376	1,280	280	330	401	28	32	38	11	10	13	1,532	1,748	1,732
JUNE	1,326	1,378	1,279	365	340	473	37	23	28	14	10	11	1,742	1,751	1,791
TOTALS	14,893	15,507	16,349	3,481	4,078	4,889	1,361	1,073	1,020	692	598	478	20,427	21,303	22,736

Terms used in table:

New: A first-time claim.

Reopen: Reopen a denied claim or make a modification to an existing claim, such as for a new medical condition or disability or an increase in an established disability.

21-8416: The VA Form 21-8416 is used to report a claimant's medical expenses for the previous year, so that the claimant may claim partial reimbursement for medical expenses. Veterans service representatives frequently assist claimants in completing this form.

EVR: Eligibility Verification Report. Submitted annually by some pension recipients to verify income and continuing eligibility. Veterans service representatives frequently assist pension recipients in completing this form.

Table 3
Claims Submitted to USDVA - Sorted by Field Office

MONTH	NEW			REOPEN			21-8416			EVR			TOTAL CLAIMS		
	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08
ACCOMAC	381	377	316	3	25	50	34	27	51	35	15	11	453	446	398
ALEXANDRIA	110	357	379	69	263	457	5	6	13	0	0	0	184	627	849
RICHMOND/AMELIA	496	329	211	249	217	103	37	29	37	11	16	6	793	594	357
BIG STONE GAP	609	729	880	86	107	35	67	65	64	44	29	33	806	922	1,012
BRISTOL	1,201	1,024	977	57	70	68	154	137	138	75	87	68	1,487	1,334	1,251
CEDAR BLUFF	1,105	953	876	120	306	385	99	83	58	49	45	27	1,373	1,394	1,346
CHARLOTTESVILLE	375	292	306	19	25	76	59	56	40	31	35	22	484	411	444
DANVILLE	463	371	674	31	19	51	27	35	19	22	35	9	543	459	753
FAIRFAX	53	128	154	16	37	48	0	2	3	0	3	2	68	167	207
FRONT ROYAL	737	465	466	244	98	32	12	21	12	18	14	6	1,009	599	516
HAMPTON VAMC		60	433		16	162		1	0		0	0		76	605
HAMPTON	1,771	1,638	1,582	633	683	603	41	23	20	21	18	20	2,465	2,362	2,225
LYNCHBURG	446	489	452	39	51	23	162	132	107	76	65	52	723	741	634
MCGUIRE VAMC	251	333	694	215	453	800	2	0	4	3	10	13	471	797	1,511
NORFOLK		213	451		31	81		1	0		0	0		245	532
PORTSMOUTH		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
QUANTICO	779	439	286	133	89	148	18	3	0	15	2	3	945	532	437
ROANOKE	455	500	475	89	115	106	78	16	31	47	9	15	669	640	627
SALEM VAMC		74	360		31	241		4	56		0	8		110	665
SOUTH HILL	357	430	441	128	132	131	128	116	106	79	79	65	730	758	743
STAUNTON	949	1,014	881	144	150	211	196	172	196	77	69	68	1,791	1,418	1,356
TIDEWATER	4,127*	4,440*	4,160*	1,182*	1,142*	958*	121*	78*	64*	64*	42*	44*	5,008*	5,705*	5,226*
WYTHEVILLE	228	852	885	24	18	120	121	66	31	34	25	6	394	966	1,042
TOTALS	14,893	15,507	16,349	3,481	4,078	4,783	1,361	1,073	1,008	692	598	478	20,427	21,303	22,736

* Includes claims activity for the Portsmouth Benefits Office.

Terms used in table:

New: A first-time claim.

Reopen: Reopen a denied claim or make a modification to an existing claim, such as for a new medical condition or disability or an increase in an established disability.

21-8416: The VA Form 21-8416 is used to report a claimant's medical expenses for the previous year, so that the claimant may claim partial reimbursement for medical expenses. Veterans service representatives frequently assist claimants in completing this form.

EVR: Eligibility Verification Report. Submitted annually by some pension recipients to verify income and continuing eligibility. Veterans service representatives frequently assist pension recipients in completing this form.

Table 4
Client Contacts - Sorted by Month

MONTH	WALK-INS			PHONE			ITINERANT POINTS			TOTAL CONTACTS		
	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08
JULY	2,590	3,828	3,582	5,952	7,802	6,913	432	837	640	8,974	12,467	11,135
AUGUST	3,586	3,751	4,391	6,875	7,728	7,663	309	444	469	10,770	11,923	12,523
SEPTEMBER	2,715	3,572	3,566	6,693	6,981	6,876	398	377	501	9,806	10,930	10,943
OCTOBER	2,925	3,898	3,656	6,542	7,101	6,892	622	548	475	10,089	11,547	11,023
NOVEMBER	2,689	3,228	3,414	5,989	7,010	6,358	648	310	450	9,326	10,548	10,222
DECEMBER	2,648	3,082	2,803	5,758	6,021	5,947	563	229	464	8,969	9,375	9,214
JANUARY	4,190	3,676	4,439	7,644	7,363	7,896	477	935	665	12,311	11,974	13,000
FEBRUARY	3,789	3,541	4,098	7,275	6,598	7,719	877	791	762	11,941	10,930	12,579
MARCH	4,274	4,061	4,156	8,261	7,172	7,750	778	723	726	13,313	11,901	12,632
APRIL	3,648	3,497	4,122	7,182	6,650	7,408	841	751	618	11,671	10,888	12,148
MAY	3,277	3,758	3,474	6,948	6,945	6,845	458	631	551	10,683	11,334	10,870
JUNE	3,828	3,731	3,715	7,802	6,724	6,382	837	1,106	707	12,467	11,561	10,804
TOTALS	40,159	43,623	45,359	82,921	84,095	84,565	7,240	7,682	7,026	130,320	135,378	137,093

Terms used in table:

Office Walk-Ins: Number of clients who visit a DVS field office

Phone: Number of phone calls received by DVS field offices

Itinerant Point: Number of clients who visit an itinerant service point

Table 5
Client Contacts - Sorted by Field Office

	WALK-INS			PHONE			ITINERANT POINTS			TOTAL CONTACTS		
	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08
ACCOMAC	1,083	1,136	1,215	3,314	3,077	2,647	183	196	80	4,582	4,409	3,942
ALEXANDRIA	303	914	891	756	1,871	4,483	73	288	282	1,130	3,030	5,656
AMELIA/RICHMOND	2,345	1,730	522	5,426	8,606	3,604	1,057	983	545	8,828	11,319	4,671
BIG STONE GAP	1,552	2,270	2,513	2,849	3,261	3,198	260	294	254	4,661	5,825	5,965
BRISTOL	2,319	2,142	2,183	3,193	3,407	3,407	111	107	114	5,623	5,656	5,704
CEDAR BLUFF	2,661	2,835	2,271	2,926	2,923	2,806	180	186	150	5,767	5,944	5,227
CHARLOTTESVILLE	1,274	1,239	986	2,695	2,267	1,587	100	88	20	4,069	3,594	2,593
DANVILLE	1,332	1,241	2,136	1,270	1,222	3,308	208	234	581	2,810	2,697	6,025
FAIRFAX	85	213	375	248	877	601	37	133	41	370	1,223	1,017
FRONT ROYAL	1,615	1,141	619	2,250	1,759	1,606	0	198	189	3,865	3,098	2,414
HAMPTON VAMC		211	2,187		323	977		0	27		236	3,191
HAMPTON	4,329	4,523	4,016	5,879	2,793	2,527	320	230	104	10,528	7,844	6,647
LYNCHBURG	1,359	1,386	1,318	3,446	3,357	3,569	291	239	182	5,096	4,982	5,069
MCGUIRE VAMC	1,443	2,623	5,124	465	1,864	2,784	22	43	259	1,930	4,573	8,167
NORFOLK		314	784		232	608		40	33		586	1,425
PORTSMOUTH		0	0		0	0		0	0		0	0
QUANTICO	758	1,020	982	4,016	3,122	2,332	440	178	41	5,214	4,320	3,355
ROANOKE	873	1,269	942	4,455	4,547	4,367	228	159	111	5,556	5,965	5,420
SALEM VAMC		201	717		351	2,162		63	315		615	3,194
SOUTH HILL	747	688	734	1,836	1,715	1,712	490	386	385	3,073	2,789	2,831
STAUNTON	2,837	2,741	2,765	3,272	3,314	2,615	431	534	598	6,540	6,589	5,978
TIDEWATER	11,601*	12,302*	11,158*	31,267*	31,436*	32,871*	2,519*	3,048*	2,646*	45,417*	46,774*	46,675*
WYTHEVILLE	1,643	1,484	978	3,358	1,771	878	290	55	71	5,291	3,310	1,927
TOTALS	40,159	43,623	45,416	82,921	84,095	84,649	7,240	7,682	7,028	130,292	135,378	137,093

* Includes contact activity for the Portsmouth Benefits Office.

Terms used in table:

Walk-Ins: Number of clients who visit a DVS field office

Phone: Number of phone calls received by DVS field offices

Itinerant Point: Number of clients who visit an itinerant service point

State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training

Mission

Enable access to post-secondary education opportunities for veterans and eligible family members.

Services and Organization

Operating under a contract with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, the State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training (SAA) reviews, evaluates, and approves post-secondary education and training programs offered by educational institutions, businesses, and industries in the Commonwealth of Virginia. After a program has been approved, veterans and other persons eligible for benefits under Titles 38 and 10 of the U.S. Code may enroll and receive financial assistance from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. The SAA ensures compliance with state and federal regulations through on-site visits to active institutions and establishments.

The SAA has a secondary mission of making veterans and eligible family members aware of veterans education and training programs. Outreach activities are conducted at job fairs, military bases in the Commonwealth, and at veterans events hosted by DVS.

With just seven full-time employees, the SAA has responsibility for providing supervision and support for 898 education and training institutions. While some institutions only offer one program, in many cases an institution offers multiple programs, each requiring separate approval. The institution with the most approved programs is George Mason University with 360 programs.

Resources

	FY07	FY08	FY09
Budget	\$603,936	\$617,619	\$704,223
Positions	7	7	7

Activities

As part of its mission to review, evaluate, and approve post-secondary education and training programs, the SAA performs two types of approval actions: program approval and other approval. Program approval actions deal with initial or revised approval of an educational program, while other approval actions focus on revisions to a previously approved publication or document containing program or policy information.

The SAA performed 5,342 program approval actions between October 2007 and September 2008, with 4,981, or 93 percent, being approved, and 361 being disapproved. During the same period, SAA handled 1,175 other approval actions, of which 1,102, or 94 percent, were approved and 73

were disapproved. Table 6 shows program approval actions, while Table 7 details other approval actions. Data is presented for federal fiscal year 2008 since SAA activity is tracked on that basis.

A key element of the review, evaluation, and approval process is the supervisory visit, in which an SAA official visits the educational institution and meets with key staff members. SAA's contract with the USDVA called for visits to 337 (80 percent) of the 421 active institutions in FFY08. The SAA exceeded this goal, making supervisory visits to 395 facilities (94 percent). Supervisory visit activity is detailed in Table 8.

Table 6
State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training
Program Approval Actions: FFY06, FFY07, FFY08

Oct - Dec	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
Number of Applications Received	1,197	1,148	1,113	558	560	431	6	6	12	8	4	1	0	2	45
Number Approved	1,163	1,078	1,033	464	502	365	6	6	12	8	4	1	0	2	10
Number Disapproved	34	70	80	94	58	66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	35
Percentage of Applications Approved	97%	93.9%	93%	83%	89.6%	85%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	N/A	100%	22%

Jan - Mar	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Number of Applications Received	526	409	288	251	134	248	6	6	26	7	4	3	0	0	3
Number Approved	464	377	271	225	88	237	6	6	26	6	4	3	0	0	3
Number Disapproved	62	32	17	26	46	11	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage of Applications Approved	88%	92.2%	94%	90%	65.7%	96%	100%	100%	100%	85%	100%	100%	N/A	N/A	100%

Apr - Jun	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Number of Applications Received	436	509	960	614	417	589	2	0	15	12	0	11	12	3	0
Number Approved	402	491	932	534	396	546	2	0	15	12	0	11	12	3	0
Number Disapproved	34	18	28	80	21	43	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage of Applications Approved	92%	96.5%	97%	87%	95%	93%	100%	N/A	100%	100%	N/A	100%	100%	100%	N/A

Jul - Sep	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2006	2007	2006	2007
Number of Applications Received	464	839	996	485	659	586	2	10	9	11	0	6	35	0	0
Number Approved	448	769	944	450	575	558	2	10	8	11	0	6	34	0	0
Number Disapproved	16	70	52	35	84	28	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
Percentage of Applications Approved	97%	91.7%	95%	93%	87.3%	95%	100%	100%	89%	100%	N/A	100%	97%	N/A	0

	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08
Totals for Federal Fiscal Year	06	07	08	06	07	08	06	07	08	06	07	08	06	07	08
Number of Applications Received	2,623	2,905	3,357	1,908	1,770	1,854	16	22	62	38	8	21	47	5	48
Number Approved	2,477	2,715	3,180	1,673	1,561	1,706	16	22	61	37	8	21	46	5	13
Number Disapproved	146	190	177	235	209	148	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	35
Percentage of Applications Approved	94%	93.5%	95%	88%	88.2%	92%	100%	100%	98%	97%	100%	100%	98%	100%	27%

IHL = Institute of Higher Learning

NCD = Non-College Degree Program

APP = Apprenticeship Program

OJT = On the Job Training Program

LIC/CERT = Licensing/Certification Program

Table 7
State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training
Other Approval Actions: FFY05, FFY06, and FFY07

	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
Oct - Dec	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
Number of Applications Received	370	63	75	125	55	107	6	23	22	13	69	64	2	2	6
Number Approved	354	52	65	111	46	95	6	23	22	13	69	64	2	2	5
Number Disapproved	16	11	10	14	9	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Percentage of Applications Approved	96%	82.5%	87%	89%	83.6%	89%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	83%
Jan - Mar	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
Number of Applications Received	51	29	45	49	43	87	5	22	43	9	0	86	0	0	2
Number Approved	43	25	40	43	36	83	5	22	43	8	0	86	0	0	2
Number Disapproved	8	4	5	6	7	4	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage of Applications Approved	98%	86.2%	89%	92%	83.7%	95%	100%	100%	100%	89%	N/A	100%	N/A	N/A	100%
Apr - Jun	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
Number of Applications Received	70	87	78	86	72	108	2	13	31	15	53	94	4	3	0
Number Approved	56	52	73	68	66	91	2	13	31	15	53	94	4	3	0
Number Disapproved	14	35	5	18	6	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage of Applications Approved	80%	59.8%	96%	79%	91.7%	84%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	0
Jul - Sep	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
Number of Applications Received	51	75	74	84	117	113	9	39	24	52	62	116	3	0	0
Number Approved	42	64	63	70	96	106	9	39	23	52	62	116	3	0	0
Number Disapproved	9	11	11	14	21	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Percentage of Applications Approved	82%	85.3%	85%	83%	82.1%	94%	100%	100%	96%	100%	100%	100%	100%	N/A	N/A

	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08
Totals for Federal Fiscal Year	06	07	08	06	07	08	06	07	08	06	07	08	06	07	08
Number of Applications Received	542	254	272	344	287	415	22	155	120	89	184	360	9	5	8
Number Approved	495	193	241	292	244	375	22	155	119	88	184	360	9	5	7
Number Disapproved	47	61	31	52	43	40	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1
Percentage of Applications Approved	94%	76%	89%	93%	85%	90%	100%	100%	99%	99%	100%	100%	100%	100%	88%

IHL = Institute of Higher Learning

NCD = Non-College Degree Program

APP = Apprenticeship Program

OJT = On the Job Training Program

LIC/CERT = Licensing/Certification Program

Table 8
State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training
Supervisory Visits: FFY05, FFY06, and FFY07

	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
Oct - Dec	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
Number of Visits	6	35	20	11	9	12	2	4	10	1	3	8	N/A	N/A	N/A
	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
Jan - Mar	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
Number of Visits	33	13	50	19	18	31	6	6	13	1	13	20	N/A	N/A	N/A
	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
Apr - Jun	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
Number of Visits	94	81	61	52	32	38	5	9	16	23	19	27	N/A	N/A	N/A
	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
Jul - Sep	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008	2006	2007	2008
Number of Visits	36	40	35	27	21	22	5	18	5	6	5	27	N/A	N/A	N/A
	IHL			NCD			APP			OJT			LIC/CERT		
Totals for Federal Fiscal Year	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08	FFY 06	FFY 07	FFY 08
Number of Visits	169	169	166	109	80	103	18	37	44	31	40	82	327	326	N/A

IHL = Institute of Higher Learning
 NCD = Non-College Degree Program
 APP = Apprenticeship Program
 OJT = On the Job Training Program
 LIC/CERT = Licensing/Certification Program

Virginia Veterans Care Center

Mission

Provide affordable, high quality, and comprehensive nursing and domiciliary care to Commonwealth of Virginia veterans residing in the Virginia Veterans Care Center.

Services and Organization

Opened on Veterans Day, 1992, the Virginia Veterans Care Center (VVCC) provides state-of-the-art long-term health care for up to 240 veterans in 120 semi-private rooms. Of the facility's 240 beds, 180 are dedicated as skilled nursing care beds, including 60 dedicated to the care of Alzheimer's patients. There are 60 beds serving assisted-living (domiciliary care) patients.

The Care Center provides on-site physical therapy, respiratory therapy, and podiatry care, as well as many other ancillary health care services. The Care Center also offers amenities such as a wheelchair accessible nature trail and deck, library, chapel, barbershop, billiard room, and wood working shop.

The Virginia Veterans Care Center is located adjacent to the Salem VA Medical Center, a 288-bed facility that provides a wide range of health care services.

With 254 authorized positions in FY08, the Care Center is by far the largest section in the Department of Veterans Services (DVS). The Care Center's largest operating divisions are the nursing, housekeeping, and dietary sections.

Volunteers play an important part in Care Center operations, assisting in many areas of patient care. The facility interacts with approximately 30 veterans service organizations (VSOs) and more than 120 individual volunteers, who, in addition to donating generously of their time, also donate both money and materials to improve the welfare of Care Center residents.

Working in conjunction with the VSOs and individual volunteers, staff members hold numerous activities for VVCC residents, including two carnivals for residents and their families. Attendance at each of the carnivals exceeds 400. The VVCC was pleased to again host a stop-over and dinner for more than 350 veterans on their way to Washington D.C. as part of the annual Run-For-The-Wall event. The bikers visited with VVCC residents, shared experiences, and showed off their bikes.

Each year, the VVCC conducts Operation Holiday Spirit (OHS) and raises approximately \$20,000 in donations to purchase Christmas gifts for all Care Center residents. As of December 8, 2008, OHS has a balance of approximately \$20,341. The funds will provide gifts and activities for the residents, and will ensure that every resident receives something for Christmas.

The Virginia Veterans Care Center receives no operating monies from the General Fund, operating entirely on revenues produced through caring for veterans. Revenue sources include Medicaid, Medicare, per diem payments from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and private funding

sources. Per diem payments from the USDVA accounted for approximately 27 percent of VVCC revenues in FY08. Of the balance, 36 percent of the funding for care was provided by Medicaid, 20 percent by private funds, 16 percent by Medicare, and one percent by Hospice Medicare.

The Virginia Veterans Care Center provided 61,132 patient days of nursing care and 20,249 patient days of assisted living care to Virginia veterans in FY08. The patient day measure is used for billing purposes and to track occupancy. A patient day is one day spent by one patient in the Care Center. Dividing the number of patient days in a given month by the number of days in that month gives the average occupancy for the period in question.

Resources

	FY07	FY08	FY09
Budget	\$16,264,000	\$16,264,000	\$17,329,752
Positions	254	254	258

Activities

The Virginia Veterans Care Center had a 93 percent average occupancy level in FY08 – with an average of 93 percent of the nursing care and 92 percent of the assisted living beds being occupied. In FY08, the Care Center provided 2,183 (3.45% percent) less days of nursing care than in FY07, but 151 more days of assisted living care than in FY07 (.75 percent). The annual occupancy rates for nursing care and assisted living units for FY07 were 94 percent and 94 percent, respectively. Table 9 shows Care Center patient days and occupancy levels.

In July 2008, the USDVA conducted the annual survey/inspection of all of the departments of the Virginia Veterans Care Center. The Care Center was found to be in full compliance with all 158 USDVA standards.

In May 2008, the Virginia Department of Health, Office of Licensure and Certification conducted an abbreviated standard survey of the Virginia Veterans Care Center. No deficiencies were cited.

In order to comply with Executive Order 48, the Care Center has contracted with a company to upgrade building, electrical, heat and air conditioning systems, and to initiate water conservation measures. These changes will provide an improved environment for the veterans, families, and staff, and they are projected to enhance operational efficiencies, reduce costs and conserve resources.

Table 9
Virginia Veterans Care Center
Patient Days and average occupancy level - FY06, FY07, and FY08

MONTH	PATIENT DAYS NURSING			AVERAGE # OF NURSING BEDS OCCUPIED			OCCUPANCY LEVEL: NURSING			PATIENT DAYS ASSISTED LIVING			AVERAGE # OF ASSISTED LIVING BEDS OCCUPIED			OCCUPANCY LEVEL: ASSISTED LIVING		
	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08
July	5,034	5,362	5,298	162	173	171	90%	96%	95%	1,735	1,691	1,769	56	55	57	93%	91%	95%
August	5,053	5,419	5,291	163	175	171	91%	97%	95%	1,737	1,680	1,777	56	54	57	93%	90%	96%
September	4,980	5,184	5,034	166	173	168	92%	96%	93%	1,655	1,619	1,721	55	54	57	92%	90%	96%
October	5,275	5,456	5,140	170	176	166	95%	98%	92%	1,737	1,705	1,780	56	55	57	93%	92%	96%
November	5,245	5,261	5,107	175	175	179	97%	97%	95%	1,739	1,674	1,727	58	56	58	97%	93%	96%
December	5,327	5,404	5,318	172	174	172	95%	97%	95%	1,812	1,606	1,795	58	52	58	97%	86%	97%
January	5,341	5,473	5,296	172	177	171	96%	98%	95%	1,734	1,620	1,797	56	52	58	93%	87%	97%
February	4,957	4,874	4,813	177	174	166	98%	97%	92%	1,648	1,513	1,575	59	54	54	98%	90%	91%
March	5,415	5,387	5,161	175	174	166	97%	97%	92%	1,853	1,690	1,617	60	55	52	100%	91%	87%
April	5,244	5,120	4,885	175	171	163	97%	95%	90%	1,723	1,718	1,575	57	57	53	96%	95%	88%
May	5,415	5,237	4,923	175	169	158	97%	94%	88%	1,731	1,838	1,601	56	59	52	93%	99%	86%
June	5,114	5,138	4,866	170	171	162	95%	95%	90%	1,582	1,744	1,515	53	58	51	88%	97%	84%
Annual Maximum Capacity	65,700	65,700	65,700	180	180	180	100%	100%	100%	21,900	21,900	21,900	60	60	60	100%	100%	100%
Total Patient Days	62,400	63,315	61,132							20,686	20,098	20,249						
Monthly Average	5,200	5,276	5,094	171	173	167	95%	96%	93%	1,724	1,675	1,687	57	55	55	94%	92%	92%

Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center

Services and Organization

DVS dedicated the state's second long-term care center for veterans on September 26, 2007. The Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center (SBVCC), a single-level facility, features 160 single-occupancy rooms in three nursing units and is located on the campus of the McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond. The care center has two 60-bed skilled nursing care units and one 40-bed Alzheimer's/dementia unit with enclosed courtyards.

In January 2008, SBVCC successfully completed all inspections and requirements for licensure by the Virginia Department of Health and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. This certified the facility to accept both Medicare and Medicaid. In March 2008, the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs inspected SBVCC. All criteria were met and the facility became VA-certified.

SBVCC admitted the first patients on January 7, 2008. The Center anticipates reaching full occupancy by late February 2009. As of October 2008, 152 veterans have been admitted. Many of these residents came to the Center for short-term therapy and rehabilitation in order to return home.

Revenue for SBVCC is generated via Medicare, Medicaid, VA subsidies, insurance, and private funds. To date, \$1.1 million in revenue has been collected. When maximum occupancy is reached in February 2009, the facility will generate sufficient monthly revenue to cover operating costs.

The design of SBVCC reflects the latest in health care facility design and research. All rooms are single occupancy to limit the spread of infectious diseases and assure residents a level of privacy essential to their mental well-being. Each room has a floor-to-ceiling window, private bath and walk-in shower. The Alzheimer's unit features a wander garden and interconnected hallways allowing residents to move around freely in a safe and secure environment.

The facility provides physical, occupational, and speech therapy, as well as therapeutic recreation, social and spiritual activities, and other amenities such as an on-site pharmacy, a fully equipped barber and beauty shop, activity and game rooms, resident lounges in each nursing unit, courtyards and an outdoor walking trail. Veterans may be admitted as long-term residents or on a short-term basis for rehabilitation as they transition from hospital care to home.

The 114,000-square foot facility was built using a combination of funds provided by the U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs put up 57 percent of the construction cost and the state funded the remainder. Total cost for the facility was \$25,866,000.

To be eligible for admission, a veteran must have an honorable discharge and must be a Virginia resident at the time of admission. Veterans may also qualify if they were Virginia residents at the time they entered the military.

The Care Center is named for two Congressional Medal of Honor recipients: Colonel Van T. Barfoot and Colonel Carl L. Sitter. Barfoot was awarded the Medal of Honor as a sergeant in the U.S. Army for extraordinary heroism in the face of point blank fire on May 23, 1944, near Carano, Italy. Sitter received the Medal of Honor as a captain in U.S. Marines where he was the commanding officer in action against enemy aggressor forces at Hagaru-ri, Korea, on November 29 and 30, 1950.

Resources

	FY07	FY08	FY09
Budget	\$787,100	\$11,630,339	\$13,349,486
Positions	233	233	233

Of the 233 full-time classified positions budgeted, 187 have been filled.

Activities

SBVCC has a current occupancy of 106 veterans, 66 percent of the facility’s capacity. Based on projections, the facility will reach 96 to 98 percent occupancy by late February 2009. All three nursing units are open and admitting residents. Table 10 documents the Care Center’s patient days nursing and average occupancy level.

Table 10
Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center
Patient days and average occupancy level - FY08

MONTH	PATIENT DAYS			AVERAGE # OF			OCCUPANCY LEVEL:		
	NURSING			NURSING BEDS			NURSING		
	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY06	FY07	FY08
July									
August									
September									
October									
November									
December									
January			101			4			3%
February			437			15			9%
March			729			24			15%
April			1,058			35			22%
May			1,607			52			32%
June			1,807			60			38%
Annual									
Maximum									
Capacity			58,400			160			100%
Total Patient									
Days			5,739			64			40%
Monthly									
Average			957			32			20%

Cemetery Services

Mission

Provide a dignified final resting place for veterans and eligible dependents at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Amelia and the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery in Suffolk.

Services and Organization

The Cemetery Services section of the Virginia Department of Veterans Services (DVS) operates Virginia's two state-owned veterans cemeteries – the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia and the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery. After receiving the title to an 80-acre parcel of land from the U. S. Department of the Army, Radford Army Ammunition Plant, the agency is moving forward with the design and construction of a third cemetery. The agency anticipates opening the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Dublin in fall 2010. These state-operated cemeteries provide veterans and eligible family members with a dignified and honorable final resting place.

The cemeteries accommodate three types of interments: in-ground burial of casketed remains, in-ground inurnment of cremated remains, and above ground inurnment of cremated remains in a columbarium. Cremated remains are inurned in the same manner and with the same honors as casketed remains.

In-ground burials of casketed remains at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia are marked with upright marble headstones, with one garden section having flat granite markers. At the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery, casketed remains are marked with upright granite headstones. Ground inurnments are marked with flat granite markers at both cemeteries, while above ground (columbarium) inurnments are marked by an inscribed marble niche cover at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery and by an inscribed granite niche cover at the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery.

Any member of the U.S. armed forces who dies on active duty, anyone retired from military service, or any veteran discharged under conditions other than dishonorable or undesirable is eligible for interment in a Virginia veterans cemetery. Also eligible for burial, if they meet certain requirements, are members of the reserve forces and the National Guard, commissioned officers of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, some American merchant mariners, and some others.

Dependents, including the legal spouse (or widow or widower) and/or an unmarried minor child under age 21, are also eligible to be buried in a Virginia veterans cemetery. In addition, an unmarried adult child, who, before the age of 21, became permanently incapable of self-support because of physical or mental disability, may also be interred.

There is no charge for the gravesite/columbarium or necessary interment services for a qualified veteran at a Virginia veterans cemetery. The Commonwealth furnishes the gravesite, opens and closes the grave, orders a grave marker from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, places the grave marker, and furnishes perpetual care of the gravesite without charge. The veteran and his or

her dependents, however, must purchase a casket and a vault or grave liner for in-ground burials, or a plastic, stone (marbleized) or metal urn for cremated remains. Wooden urns are acceptable for above ground placement.

For each veteran buried in a state-operated veterans cemetery, DVS receives a \$300 reimbursement, called a plot allowance, from the USDVA. Dependents are charged an amount equal to the USDVA plot allowance. These monies, representing from 25 to 30 percent of the section’s annual budget, are used to fund both current operations and maintenance projects. The bulk of the section’s budget comes from the Commonwealth’s General Fund.

To eliminate any administrative difficulties that may occur at the time of death, veterans are encouraged to complete a pre-application for burial in a Virginia veterans cemetery. While DVS will not assign a specific gravesite when a pre-application is submitted, the pre-application process ensures that all required paperwork has been submitted and verified. At present, 1,464 pre-applications are on file at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia while the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery has 2,450 pre-applications on file. The pre-application process is free of charge.

The Cemetery Services section is led by the cemeteries director who oversees all operations at both cemeteries and is coordinating the land transfer and construction process for Virginia’s third cemetery, the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Dublin.

The Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery staffing guidelines call for a groundskeeping staff of six. At present the cemetery groundskeeping staff consists only of a grounds supervisor and four funeral team leaders. A sixth grounds worker position has been authorized but not filled. Additionally, an authorized administrative position has not been filled. Finally, there is one full-time mechanic who maintains the equipment at both cemeteries. During peak periods, the cemetery office manager and administrative staff provide assistance to the groundskeeping staff.

The Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia, located southwest of Richmond in Amelia County, has a staff of five. A full-time office manager and a full-time administration coordinator are responsible for all administrative duties. The grounds staff consists of a full-time grounds supervisor and two full-time funeral team leaders.

Resources

	FY07	FY08	FY09
Budget	\$676,395	\$797,060	\$834,539
Positions	14	16	16

Activities

The Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia was dedicated in May 1997, with the first burial service conducted on June 17, 1997. The Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia currently has 28 acres developed with an additional 99 acres – representing three additional phases – available for future development. The average annual burial/inurnment rate at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia has been approximately 225 burials per year, with 231 burials performed in FY06 and 228 burials in FY07, and 213 in FY08. If the average burial rate remains between 200 and 250 burials per year, the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia should be in full operation for another 80 years.

Phase One of the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery was dedicated on November 1, 2004, and encompasses 29 of 74 acres available on this site. The first burial service was conducted on December 13, 2004. Construction of three additional phases will be completed as needed. The annual burial/inurnment rate at the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery averages 550 burials per year. If this rate remains relatively constant, the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery should be in full operation for approximately sixty years.

Both cemeteries host Memorial Day services sponsored by local veterans groups. The cemeteries hold Open House events on Veterans Day designed to inform veterans, family members, friends, and members of the public of the burial benefits available to veterans and eligible family members. Cemetery tours and assistance with completing pre-application documents are provided during business hours, Monday through Friday. The cemeteries are staffed on holidays (Easter, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Memorial Day, and Veterans Day) to assist families who may be visiting a loved one's gravesite.

The Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia performed 213 burials in FY08 compared with 228 in FY07, while the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery performed 591 burials in FY08 compared with 510 burials in FY07. Table 11 shows burial activity from FY97 through FY08.

Table 11: Cemetery Burials FY1997 – FY2008

Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia

	FY97	FY98	FY99	FY00	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08
July	N/A	5	6	8	9	13	16	14	18	16	26	17
August	N/A	9	8	12	13	15	9	14	17	16	17	13
September	N/A	11	3	9	5	17	10	10	16	20	17	15
October	N/A	5	8	9	13	19	14	23	17	15	22	25
November	N/A	7	7	8	6	13	18	11	20	18	22	13
December	N/A	14	7	7	8	16	16	19	18	14	18	22
January	N/A	7	8	10	12	11	19	17	16	19	20	15
February	N/A	9	6	12	12	11	13	15	11	25	18	16
March	N/A	12	9	11	12	18	18	13	16	21	19	19
April	N/A	9	8	12	10	12	8	15	12	23	18	19
May	N/A	3	9	17	12	16	12	13	11	23	13	18
June	2	4	12	9	9	14	16	15	16	21	18	21
Total	2	95	91	124	121	175	169	179	188	231	228	213

Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery, Suffolk

	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08
July	N/A	42	40	54
August	N/A	40	39	31
September	N/A	39	32	35
October	N/A	28	29	49
November	N/A	35	37	40
December	34	37	41	52
January	47	36	48	60
February	29	51	47	56
March	40	43	58	51
April	44	40	38	55
May	28	46	50	44
June	33	41	51	64
Total	255	478	510	591

Administrative Services

Mission

Support the delivery of quality services to Virginia’s veterans.

Services and Organization

The Administrative and Support Services section provides accounting, budget, human resources, information technology, payroll, contracting/procurement, and marketing and communications support services to the four service-delivery programs.

During FY08, the Administrative and Support Services section was comprised of 19 authorized positions. Fifteen of these positions are currently filled; five are part-time positions.

Resources

	FY07	FY08	FY09
Budget	\$1,778,034	\$2,662,373	\$2,051,984
Positions	19	19	15

Budget and Legislative Highlights

Veterans issues continued to enjoy the strong, bi-partisan support of the executive and legislative branches in fiscal year 2008. Budget and legislative highlights of FY08 include:

- Creation of the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program (VWWP) – \$2.4 million in FY09 and \$2.0 million in FY10 to monitor and coordinate mental health and rehabilitative services support for Virginia veterans, members of the Virginia National Guard and Virginia residents in the Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service, and their family members.
- \$100,000 in FY09 (subsequently reduced to \$50,000) to continue development of the electronic claims processing system.
- The appropriation of an additional \$2.25 million in General Funds to support the construction of the Paul and Phyllis Galanti Education Center at the Virginia War Memorial.
- Transfer of administrative support for the Virginia War Memorial from the Department of General Services to the Department of Veterans Services.

Department Resources (as approved by the 2008 General Assembly)

Operating Budget History

	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	Total	Positions
2005 Appropriation	\$2,544,271	\$14,216,430	\$16,760,701	295
2006 Appropriation	\$3,568,102	\$14,256,630	\$17,824,732	308
2007 Appropriation	\$4,489,637	\$17,700,072	\$22,189,709	402
2008 Appropriation	\$5,764,721	\$27,814,841	\$33,579,562	602

New Operating Budget Summary

	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	Total	Positions
Base Budget (FY08 Appropriation)	\$5,764,721	\$27,814,841	\$33,579,562	602
2009 Addenda	\$2,783,320	\$2,472,764	\$5,256,084	8
2009 Total	\$8,548,041	\$30,287,605	\$38,835,646	610

	General Fund	Nongeneral Fund	Total	Positions
Base Budget (FY08 Appropriation)	\$5,764,721	\$27,814,841	\$33,579,562	602
2010 Addenda	\$2,283,320	\$2,472,764	\$4,756,084	8
2010 Total	\$8,048,041	\$30,287,605	\$38,335,646	610

Program Highlights

Agency Outreach

Events

DVS actively participates in numerous events throughout the year—veterans service organization conventions, community events for veterans, stand downs for homeless veterans, dedication ceremonies, and a variety of other events. In many cases, benefit services representatives attend these events as well as personnel from the Virginia Veterans Care Center, the cemeteries, and the State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training. During FY 08, the agency was represented at 226 events. The Commissioner participated in approximately 30 special events, speaking at approximately 12 of these events.

During FY08, DVS hosted six townhall meetings, held open houses at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Amelia and the Albert G. Horton, Jr. Memorial Veterans Cemetery on both Memorial Day and Veterans Day, co-hosted the Virginia is for Heroes Conferences in Richmond and Hampton with the Mid-Atlantic Addiction Technology Transfer Center, hosted the deed transfer ceremony for the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Dublin, and partnered with the Departments of Rehabilitative Services and Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services to host the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program Summit: Painting a Moving Train.

Table 12
DVS Participation in Outreach Events—FY08

Month/Year	Number of Events Attended by DVS Area				Total Events Attended
	Benefits	State Approving Agency	Virginia Veterans Care Center	Cemeteries	
July 2007	6	7	4	3	20
August 2007	10	7	0	0	17
September 2007	14	11	4	0	29
October 2007	9	3	4	2	18
November 2007	9	4	3	2	18
December 2007	1	2	1	0	4
January 2008	7	3	2	4	16
February 2008	8	3	2	4	17
March 2008	5	7	3	5	20
April 2008	13	10	1	7	31
May 2008	17	2	1	3	23
June 2008	8	3	2	0	13
Total Events Attended	107	62	27	30	226

Media Relations and Publications

Between July 2007 and June 2008, the agency issued 22 news releases and fielded approximately 83 media calls. The agency received positive coverage on the two veterans cemeteries, the findings of the long-term care study conducted by the College of William & Mary, the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center dedication, and the Virginia is for Heroes conferences in Richmond and Hampton.

Following development of an agency logo and graphic identity last fiscal year, DVS continues to develop its brand and visual identity. The agency produced two new brochures and a portable display that DVS employees can use at conferences and other activities.

Outreach to Incarcerated, Homeless, and Severely Wounded Veterans

DVS continued outreach to incarcerated veterans, homeless veterans, and seriously wounded veterans from the Global War on Terror. The agency continued building working relationships with other agencies addressing these veterans issues as well as outreach personnel at McGuire VA Medical Center, the Healing Place, Home Again, and the Richmond-area Homeward program. The agency participated in several stand downs for homeless veterans held at locations around the state.

Direct Mail

In April 2007, DVS began sending letters to all military service personnel recently discharged in Virginia. The agency receives copies of the DD214 for nearly all discharged personnel and is obtaining address information from these forms. During FY08, DVS sent out more than 11,000 letters. The letters thank the military service personnel for their service, describe the services provided by DVS and are signed by the Commissioner. An agency brochure is included with each letter.

Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Dublin

On September 22, 2008, Governor Kaine received the deed transferring an 80-acre parcel of land from the U. S. Department of the Army, Radford Army Ammunition Plant to the Commonwealth of Virginia for the Virginia Veterans Cemetery, Dublin. Transfer of the 80-acre parcel was approved in 2006 by President Bush as part of the Defense Appropriations Act.

The deed transfer represents a year's worth of work in partnership with the Department of the Army, the Army Corps of Engineers, and Congressman Boucher's office. DVS has coordinated with the Department of the Army to have detailed studies completed, including an environmental analysis. A new security fence has been installed separating the military facility from the newly acquired cemetery property, and power lines and poles have been removed from the property. A master plan has been completed laying out four phases of development for the cemetery. DVS has selected Wiley & Wilson and the LA Group to provide the architectural, engineering, and landscaping

services necessary for construction of the cemetery. DVS anticipates receiving a federal grant for cemetery construction and awarding a contract for construction by mid-summer 2009.

ARMICS

In response to the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002 (SOX) which was enacted after a surge in fraudulent activity in the private sector, the Virginia Department of Accounts issued the requirement for an Agency Risk Management and Internal Control Standards (ARMICS) self assessment by each agency. This requires each agency to review and/or establish and maintain internal agency controls in order to more effectively manage risk and maintain accountability. As designed, this is a three-part process in which an agency assesses its current internal control operations, identifies processes and transactions used, and develops a corrective plan of action. The assessment of current internal controls was completed and submitted on October 15, 2007. The assessment of processes and transactions was submitted on June 4, 2008.

Audit Points

As anticipated, some of the audit points identified in the FY 2007 audit report were a continuation of points identified in the FY2006 audit. While not desired, this was expected since limited manpower and other factors beyond the agency's control hampered the agency's ability to fully address the issue or fully implement a correction. DVS submitted the ARMICS plan in June 2008 and expects to have addressed/corrected all of the identified audit point by December 2008. It is anticipated that the APA will return in early calendar year 2009 to conduct its next annual audit.

Financial Management System

The Department purchased and is implementing a Mitchell Humphrey and Company Financial Management System (FMSII). FMSII is a state of the art financial management system and DVS will be using four of the system modules: general ledger, accounts payable, purchasing, and cost accounting. The major advantage of the system is the ability to exchange and transfer of relevant information between systems thus reducing the redundancy of paperwork. Also, once a transaction is posted, all relevant information is updated and current facts and figures are readily available

The system will increase managers' access to detailed and current information which, in turn, should allow for better management and use of available resources. Also the system will greatly enhance the development of biennial and other budget submission packages and eliminate the duplicate work now required to produce annual Medicaid and Medicare cost reports.

Currently the general ledger and accounts payable modules are fully operational. The purchasing ledger is on hold until VITA makes hardware upgrades. The cost ledger will be completed early in calendar year 2009.

As was anticipated when the decision was made to purchase the system, FMSII is providing the desired information but the implementation has been hampered by the challenges experienced by all agencies due to the new approach for provision of IT services through VITA/NG.

Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP)

The continuity of operations plan (COOP) was finalized and submitted to the Department of Emergency Management in early November, 2007. The plan identifies the essential functions provided by DVS administrative and fiscal staff. The goal of the plan is to ensure that all agency programs will receive essential support functions to maintain operations if an emergency situation threatens the location of the administrative/fiscal functions.

In addition to a maintenance schedule to keep the COOP plan viable, it details the activation and relocation of the administrative/fiscal functions, alternate operations guidance, and a plan to reconstitute essential functions within 12 hours of an emergency event and to maintain essential functions in an emergency situation for up to thirty days.

Executive Order 19

The 2007 annual report detailed the initiatives proposed in the Executive Order 19 report to Governor Timothy Kaine on May 1, 2007. Twenty-seven initiatives were outlined under the broad categories of technology, workforce development, outreach, and quality of life. Progress has been made in implementation of many of these initiatives. However, the most significant accomplishments have been in development of the Virginia Electronic Claims Processing System, workforce development, and behavior health care for wounded warriors.

Virginia Electronic Claims Processing System (formerly TurboVet)

The Virginia Electronic Claims Processing System (VECPS) creates and presents a simple and complete online series of statements and questions about a complex administrative life event, such as eligibility for VA benefits, which a veteran, or someone he or she trusts, must answer to process the event. Using data about the veteran that the agency already has on file, the system responds to as many of the statements and questions as possible. The veteran or his or her representative can confirm, change, or add data.

Then, using embedded decision logic, the system then presents only the necessary event questions needed to obtain the data the event processing requires. Once all data has been gathered, the system identifies supporting documentation that the veteran will need to provide and automatically populates all forms that the veteran will be required to submit. The veteran can save and print each document at his or her location or will be able to submit the documents electronically for processing. The VECPS Activity Center will allow the veteran to track and monitor the progress of the event processing.

The concept for VECPS was presented at the National Association of State Departments of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA) in September 2007. Several states, in addition to Virginia, are considering adopting the system. VECEPS was also demonstrated to the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations (JLC) at their August 2008 meeting and received the JLC's support.

The 2008 Virginia General Assembly allocated \$100,000 for continued development of VECPS. Unfortunately, the budget reductions required in October 2008 reduced the amount of funding dedicated to this initiative to \$50,000.

Workforce Development

The Executive Order 19 report called attention to the need for Virginia to develop job and entrepreneurial opportunities for veterans and to make employers aware of veterans' unique skills and abilities. The Commonwealth responded to recommendations in the report by establishing the Virginia Veterans Workforce Development Taskforce. Members were appointed by Secretary of Public Safety John Marshall. The Taskforce was chaired by Alfredo Sample, a member of the Board of Veterans Services.

Secretary Marshall charged the Taskforce with developing recommendations for a comprehensive workforce development initiative for veterans in Virginia with special emphasis on veterans with disabilities and those returning from the Global War on Terror. Four goals were established:

- Effectively match veterans with employers and positions
- Encourage public and private employers to hire veterans
- Encourage public and private sector employers to hire veterans with disabilities
- Develop a more comprehensive technological approach to inform veterans about where and how to obtain job and training opportunities.

Taskforce members reviewed hundreds of websites and statistical data from a host of federal and state sources. Analysis revealed that the current employment outlook in Virginia is very good overall with respect to veterans. The Taskforce concluded that Virginia has tremendous resources available for veterans but that many of these resources are stove-piped and duplicative. Veterans would benefit by realignment of these programs and simplifying existing job and training search processes.

Taskforce recommendations center on easy access for all veterans, including transitioning service members and disabled veterans; cost savings through consolidation of similar services and elimination of redundant services; increased services through technology improvements; and use of the savings realized from consolidation to design, implement, and manage new programs for veterans and their families.

DVS will continue to work with the Secretary of Public Safety and the Office of the Governor to determine the feasibility of implementing Taskforce recommendations. The current budget situation may require a phased approach; however, the comprehensive report and timelines provide a well-documented blueprint for addressing the workforce needs of Virginia veterans.

Virginia Wounded Warrior Program

The 2008 General Assembly passed and Governor Tim Kaine signed into law legislation directing DVS, in cooperation with the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation, and Substance Abuse Services (DMHMRSAS) and the Department Rehabilitative Services (DRS), to establish the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program.

The Virginia Wounded Warrior Program will coordinate support services for veterans with stress-related and traumatic brain injuries resulting from service in a combat area. The program will ensure that these veterans and their families receive timely assessment, treatment, and support. The Program will support Virginia veterans, and members of the Virginia National Guard and Virginia residents of the Armed Forces Reserves not in active federal service. The Program also supports the family members of these veterans, Guard and Reserve members.

Despite a declining economy, the General Assembly allocated \$4.4 million to the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program. In the third quarter of FY09, approximately \$1 million will be allocated through the existing Community Service Board system to expand community behavioral and brain injury services. Successful recipients of the funding will need to demonstrate cooperative arrangements with local brain injury services providers, U. S. Veterans Healthcare Administration, military treatment facilities, transitional assistance programs, and other community services for veterans and their families.

Looking to the Future

As evidenced by the 2006, 2007, and 2008 General Assembly sessions, the support of Governor Kaine and the General Assembly, and the cooperation of all state agencies, veterans issues have more support than they have had for several decades. During the coming year, DVS looks forward to continuing work on implementing the recommendations in the EO 19 report to Governor Kaine. Two of these key initiatives are continued development of an electronic claims processing system and full implementation and growth of the Virginia Wounded Warrior Program which will coordinate behavioral health care to veterans and their families, especially those returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. We also look forward to breaking ground on the third state-operated veterans cemetery in Dublin, and continued planning for a third veterans care center co-located at the Hampton VA Medical Center as well as expansion of the Sitter & Barfoot Veterans Care Center.