



KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO  
**AMERICA'S VETERANS**

# Disabled American Veterans Department of South Dakota

## *Quarterly Bulletin*

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Vol XXIV, No. 3 January 2023

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### HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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#### **CAT CONSTRUCTION, INC. DONATES \$11,000**

Business owner Cody Thomson and his team of dedicated employees at CAT Construction, Inc., present a check for \$11,000 to South Dakota DAV Chapter 3 Commander Dave Meltz and Treasurer H.G. Krossschell. CAT Construction specializes in both residential and commercial roofing. The company donated a portion of the profits from each roofing job they completed in 2022 to support Chapter 3's efforts serving veterans in the Black Hills area and the DAV Transportation Network. Pictured in the photo are (left to right) Andee Caron, Gage Seehafer, Amber Thomson, H.G. Krossschell, Dave Meltz, Cody Thomson, Shelby Burrus and Juan Gomez. Gage Seehafer is a representative from GAF, the leading roofing manufacturer in North America. GAF manufactures the high-quality shingles that CAT Construction relies on.



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### **RECORD PAY INCREASE FOR VETERANS RECEIVING VA COMPENSATION BENEFITS**

#### **New COLA Rates for Compensation are Largest Increase in Over 30 Years**

*Taken from VA News*

It's that time of year again. VA is increasing compensation payment rates based on the latest cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) announcement. Beginning Jan. 1, 2023, Veterans and beneficiaries who receive VA compensation benefits will see an 8.7% increase in their monthly payments—the largest increase in over 30 years.

The annual COLA increase is tied to the Social Security rate change and is based on the consumer price index (CPI). The CPI, provided by the U.S. Department of Labor, measures the average changes in cost for urban goods and services. The Department of Labor takes a snapshot of the costs of a select group of goods and services and compares those costs to the previous year. When there is an increase, those receiving benefits see a boost in their monthly payments for the upcoming year.

If you are receiving disability compensation benefits from VA, you can use VA disability compensation benefit rates tables to find your current monthly payment amount.

Which VA benefits increase?

This increase affects VA disability compensation, which provides monthly tax-free payments to Veterans who got sick or injured

while serving in the military or whose service made an existing condition worse. If you have a physical ailment or mental health condition that developed during or after service, you may be eligible for disability compensation.

Beneficiaries who receive Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) will also see an increase in their payment amounts. DIC provides a surviving spouse, child or parent of a service member who died in the line of duty, or the survivor of a Veteran who died from a service-related injury or illness, with a tax-free monetary benefit.

Recipients of special benefit allowances, which include automobile allowance, clothing allowance and Medal of Honor pension, will also see an increase in benefit payments.

When to expect the increase? You should see the increased compensation amount starting with your January 2023 payment. If you do not see a difference in the amount, contact the VA regional office near you or call 800-827-1000.



## HOW DAV EDUCATES VETERANS ABOUT THEIR BENEFITS

POSTED ON DEC 27, 2022 BY JIM MARSZALEK

Looking back on 2022, I couldn't be more proud of how our benefits advocates have continued serving veterans. Despite the challenges brought by COVID-19 these past few years, DAV adapted and never stopped offering VA claims assistance for the brave men and women who defended our nation.

I'm particularly pleased with how we came back swinging by restarting our information seminars nationwide to educate veterans and their families about the benefits they've already earned.

Hundreds of information seminars have taken place this year, with our highly trained national service officers traveling into communities across the country to offer veterans and their families keen insight, completely free of charge, on how best to navigate the sometimes daunting VA claims process.

There's a reason more than 1 million veterans trust DAV with their powers of attorney: Our national service officers are the best in the business. They stand ready to hold in-person information seminars, which typically last about 45 minutes, anywhere, including educational campuses; unique event spaces; and, of course, DAV chapter locations.

We've also conducted information seminars virtually, enabling easy access to veterans—no matter where they are—to learn more about DAV's mission and how we can help. And remember, while veterans are always welcome to join our ranks, there's no membership requirement to receive an information seminar or claims assistance.

To request an information seminar, departments and chapters can always reach out to their local national service office to get one on the books.

But our expert national service officers aren't the only benefits advocates usually attending these seminars.

DAV departments and chapters have volunteer service officers ready to offer additional assistance. Our department and chapter service officers are some of the most critical links in DAV's chain. They can provide vital veterans benefits information that will better assist veterans and their families, prepare claims for benefits to which veterans may be entitled and gather crucial information needed to support claims.

Veterans can rest assured that when a department or chapter service officer takes an inquiry, such information is immediately handed off to a national service officer.

For more than a century now, DAV has been there for our nation's injured heroes, their families and their survivors. And our service officers at every level can advocate for veterans wherever they are.

You'll be able to find the 2023 information seminar schedule at [dav.org/get-help-now/veteran-topics-resources/information-seminars/](http://dav.org/get-help-now/veteran-topics-resources/information-seminars/), and you can learn more from your local national service office at [benefitsquestions.org](http://benefitsquestions.org).



## COMMANDER'S COLUMN

by Dan Francis

I'd like to wish everyone Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

By the time you receive this bulletin you should have gotten your COLA of 8.7%, for the Holiday we are asking you give one month of your COLA to the DAV so we can

keep serving our Veterans.

We sure have been busy this fall with the dedication of the Gold Star Memorial in memory of fallen DAV Members. The fall conference had a good turn out and it was good to see so many members and always, having the Auxiliary there and all the great baked goodies. Thank you.

The 727th from Brookings, presented a financial donation of \$47,000.00 from the Annual Charity Poker Run. In November, the Grand Falls Casino raised money for DAV Giving Back fund raising.

On Veterans Day we had a great turn out at the Alliance and then we went to the Veteran Cemetery for dedication of the two bronze eagles at the entrance of the cemetery watching over the fallen Heroes.

For December 25th, we gave gifts to our Veterans that are in the VA hospital over the holidays.

Just a reminder of the 83rd Annual DAV and 71st Annual DAV Auxiliary State Convention at the Sioux Falls DAV Home, May 5th-6th, 2023.

A few thoughts for our Chapters in South Dakota, a reminder we are here for fellow Veterans, we need to keep in mind when we make our decisions on where we put our money and time. You all are doing great things for our Veterans, but I want to point out that fact. In addition, remember to turn your Local Assistance Program Hours and let us continue to work together to help our fellow Veterans. Thank you for what you do.



## AUXILIARY COMMANDER'S COLUMN

by Vinceen Hanson

As you're reading this, the holidays are over. Sure hope everyone had a Blessed Christmas.

Even though the holidays are over, we can't take a break from helping our Veterans. It's a 24/7 job and someone has to do it. That's where we come in. There are so many different ways to get involved. Drive a DAV van, help them grocery shop, sit and visit with them, etc. I can go on and on. Now would be a great time to get with your financial advisor for a end of the year contribution for helping the veterans. Let's make this a stellar year for our veterans.

Just a reminder that the DAV/DAVA convention is in Sioux Falls this year in May. More details will be coming your way shortly. Please plan on attending.

That's all for now.

Thank a Veteran • God Bless America

## DAV DEPT OF SD SR VICE COMMANDER'S COLUMN

by Christine Speirs

Happy New Year fellow veterans!!! The Chapters have been doing an AWESOME job recruiting new members!! The passage of the PACT Act gives every CSO an opportunity to discuss membership while assisting a veteran file a claim. And with our current life membership discount, it helps the new members as well. We have six months left to fulfill our goals, and with all of us pitching in, I know we can make it! New members, especially the

younger veterans, are our lifeline. Without a continual stream of new members, our great organization will cease to exist, and so will our assistance to veterans.

Another great opportunity to talk membership is while selling the Department Transportation raffle tickets. So, keep some membership forms with you while selling those tickets!!

I look forward to seeing many of my brother and sister veterans at our Department convention on May 5-6th in Sioux Falls!



### Population Summary

Execution Date: 12/28/2022 1:49:27 PM

DCU No	DCU Name	Current Year					Goal				
		Total Trial	Total Part Life	Total Full Life	Total Paid Members	Total Members	Goal	Goal %	Goal Variance		
40	Department of South Dakota	0	101	4,476	4,577	4,577	4,655	98.32%	-78		
1	Arthur H Muchow #1	0	30	1,925	1,955	1,955	1,962	99.64%	-7		
3	Rapid City #3	0	31	1,219	1,250	1,250	1,270	98.43%	-20		
4	Coyote State #4	0	25	60	85	85	85	100.00%	0		
6	Watertown #6	0	3	173	176	176	184	95.65%	-8		
11	Northern Hills #11	0	8	358	366	366	370	98.65%	-5		
13	Swanson O Connor #13	0	0	270	270	270	276	96.74%	-9		
18	Oahe #18	0	3	214	217	217	227	95.59%	-10		
19	Milbank-sisseton #19	0	1	88	89	89	97	91.75%	-8		
22	Brookings #22	0	0	139	139	139	148	93.92%	-9		
27	Davison County #27	0	0	30	30	30	36	83.33%	-6		
<b>Active</b>		<b>At Large</b>		<b>Merged</b>		<b>On Hold</b>		<b>Revoked</b>		<b>Suspended</b>	
9		1		3		0		1		0	

### WEST RIVER NEWS

by Dick D. Turnwall

Three members of Rapid City Chapter 3 and three members of Northern Hills Chapter 11 attended the DAV District 14 fall meeting in Billings, MT. Our host DAV Department of Montana put together a well organized and presented agenda. We were honored to have DAV National Commander Joe Parsetich and his wife Meg in attendance. Conversations with DAV members from other states provided great ideas for methods of recruiting new members and fundraising ideas.

Chapters 3 and 11 continue holding joint monthly VA disability claims workshops in Rapid City and four northern Black Hills towns. Working together during these workshops has built a great relationship between the Chapters which has carried over to other west river events.

This past summer, Chapter 3 did some remodeling work at their building. New flooring in the their large main room, a new storage shed and exterior building painting has spruced up the place. Chapter 3 is also planning a remodel of their two office areas, but haven't set a schedule yet.

Chapter 11 continues to hold fundraisers in Deadwood with great success. Funds raised are used to support veterans, mostly in the Black Hills area. The Chapter currently has eight (8) veteran's scholarships at four (4) west river colleges, donations

made to help homeless veterans, Mid-West Honor flight, Veterans Honored Interment, VA Black Hills Health Care indigent fund, South Dakota Veterans Cemetery Support Council, and several other groups in the Black Hills area that support veterans.

The 3rd Annual Veteran's Appreciation Fair at the Community Center in Sturgis with 190 veterans participating. This is the Annual Northern Hills Veteran's standdown with several organizations, including VA Black Hills, present to provide services to veterans. Chapter 11 has participated each year looking to help veterans file VA disability claims, recruiting new members and providing Veteran's information about DAV and our programs.

Chapter 3 held a membership Christmas dinner the evening of 10 December in Rapid City. Chapter 11 membership Christmas dinner was held the evening of 8 December at The Knuckle in Sturgis.

In closing, it is with great sadness we saw Mike Bekaert, Director of In-State Military and Veteran Affairs for Senator Mike Rounds, retire at the end of 2022. Mike has been a great resource to call upon over the past few years when solving Veteran's issues. We wish Mike well in retirement.

## 1ST JR VICE COMMANDER'S REPORT

by Mark Wolf



Pictured above includes all the volunteer helpers. There were 24 hunters that committed to keeping their word by attending. This hunt had Eleven (11) volunteers with seven (7) working hunting dogs.

1. RON LINDNER, #13
2. LES HOVRUD, # 1 SFXLS
3. CODY ROLFES, ABDN, SD PHEASANTS FOREVER
4. BILL LARSON, # 1 SFXLS
5. JIM THOMPSON, # 1 SFXLS
6. CHRIS GOLDADE, SD GFP
7. JERAMY HEUPEL, #13
8. AUSTIN SPRINKLE, SD GFP
9. KURT FREDRICKSON, ABDN, SD
10. ZACHARIAH HOOK, SD GFP
11. DANIAL WEBSTER, #13 Dothan, AL
12. DAVID SCHOO, SD GFP
13. ROD MELINSKY, #13
14. LUCION LAFONTAINE, #13
15. DAVID CARLSON, Belle Fourche, SD
16. RUSSELL BAKKEN, #11 Piedmont, SD
17. DAVE SATTERLEE, ABDN, SD
18. DALE POWERS, #13 Groton, SD
19. TYLER STADEL, SD GFP
20. GERALD HOVEN, # 13
21. ROGER IMBURY, ABDN, SD S.I.L.
22. MIKE TOBY, SAN DIEGO, CA S.I.L.
23. MARK WOLF, #13
24. ROD EISENBEISZ, GPO ABDN, SD
25. GARY NORTON, #13
26. AARON WALBERG, #13
27. JERRY PAINTER, # 6 WTRTN, SD
28. HAROLD WALKER, #11 Piedmont, SD
29. CHUCK WEBSTER, #13 CLARKSVILLE, TN
30. SEAN LEESIN, #13 WTRTN, SD
31. LUKA LEESIN, WTRTN, SD
32. KYLE STODARD, #13
33. DAKOTA LARSON, SD GFP
34. DOG, HEAVY ~ A. WALBERG
35. DOG, BUBBA ~ C. WEBSTER
36. DOG, LULU ~ K. STODARD
37. DOG, CHIEF ~ D. LARSON
- AWOL! DOG, CINDER ~ K. FREDRICKSON
- AWOL! DOG, REX ~ D. SATTERLEE
- AWOL! DOG, CONEHEAD ~ D. SATTERLEE

Swanson O'Connor Chapter 13 successfully hosted THE ANNUAL DAV PHEASANT HUNT X2 in 2022.

### OUR HUNT EVENTS

This past year Aberdeen, Swanson O'Connor DAV Chapter 13 held what was called, THE ANNUAL DAV PHEASANT HUNT X2. Because of the past popularity and sparking of interest by DAV members state wide, advancements were necessary for the Aberdeen DAV to consider. In the past few years our South Dakota DAV Fall Convention timing created an attendance constraint. The Pheasant Hunt Committee members were: Senior Vice, Ron Lindner (Chair), Mark Wolf, Chapter Adjutant and Gary Norton, Chapter Treasurer.

### OUR PLANNING OBJECTIVE

Our objective was to reach out to DAV members statewide, who generally cannot get out to hunt like when they were young and who were not taken down by their military disabilities. Our membership is made up exclusively of men and women who were permanently injured or disabled in our nation's defense. We needed to be mindful of picking a time that would not interfere with other chapter scheduled activities. This additional hunt was early enough, so more active DAV chapter members and thin-skinned members could attend without chancing cold weather. We extended our invitations to the other eight (8) chapters in South Dakota targeting newer members and past hunters for the "One More Time" opportunity. We relied on e-mailed invitations responses and commitments from attendees.

## THE COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The snacks, water, pop, coffee, supplies, birds, door prizes and grand prizes are costs that add up quickly. Thanks to the financial generosity of Chapter 11 DAVA and a local grant provided by Great Plains Outdoorsmen and several local area businesses who donated meals and their services and manpower. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks volunteers, representative from Pheasants Forever also attended to help out for both hunts. Thankfully, we had a few welcomed private donations given to the chapter to further support the cost of both events.

## PARTICIPATION

The first hunt went well. It took considerable planning by the chapter committee to set-up this event, unfortunately half the attendees failed to notify us they were unable to attend or they just forgot. We caravanned as a group to the Hecla Dakota Hunting Farm. Check out: [www.dakotahuntingfarms.com](http://www.dakotahuntingfarms.com)

The event was much appreciated by everyone that made it. Signed up were DAV members from Aberdeen, Belle Fourche, Black Hawk, Mansfield, Rapid City, Sturgis, and Watertown. The Hecla Farm had over a half a dozen volunteers with least six (6) trained dogs at our disposal. Those who attended the hunt enjoyed a great day of hunting, with excellent habitat, providing good shooting. We had great stories to share and new memories of, One More Time to cherish. The host even cleaned and packaged our birds for us. The Grand Prize was A Remington 870 Fieldmaster Pump-Action Shotgun - 12 Gauge won by Gerald Hoven. Everyone won some type of door prize.

The second hunt went very well, we had great pheasant food plots to hunt. Our committee chairperson's family did another outstanding job on preparing a great spread of tables all well-organized with snacks, water, pop, and coffee. After eating field lunches, there was great veteran camaraderie among the hunters from the many chapters represented. After things calmed down, we took a few photos of the attendees then had the drawing for door prizes as in the past. Former Chapter 13 Commander Chuck Webster won the Stevens Model 555 Silver Over/Under Shotgun. Every member won some type of door prize.

## CONCLUSION

We accomplished our planning objective. There were lessons to be learned, new ideas to consider to further improve, One More Time for the disabled veterans.

## 2ND JR. VICE COMMANDER'S COLUMN

by *Tim Walsh*

Happy 2023 DAV Department of South Dakota. As we start our New Year it is once again time to start gearing up for our annual State Convention. The convention will take place in Sioux Falls this year and will be held at the Department Headquarters building. Soon we will be reaching out to all the chapters for your ads for the convention booklet. If you know of anyone who would like to support us by placing an ad in the booklet, please email their information to us at [admin@davsd.org](mailto:admin@davsd.org). Pricing and layout instructions can be found in this and the last

Department Quarterly bulletin.

Just a couple of things to pass on to the membership. I would highly recommend that all of you download the VA App to your smartphone. Very user friendly and a great way to manage your benefits and healthcare. Another useful tool I discovered was a podcast called "THE SITREP" which can be found on You Tube. It is a program by Veterans for Veterans. Very informative. Be safe this winter season and make sure to do something special on March 29th, Vietnam Veterans Day.  
Tim



Chapter No. 1 members receive nearly 300 winter coats from Scheels in Sioux Falls. Thank you Scheels for your support to Veterans and their families! If a Chapter is in need of coats for Veterans in your community, please contact the DAV HQ.



Chapter 3 Commander Dave Meltz and Treasurer H.G. Krosschell deliver a check for \$750 to Tony Russell and Allan Schauer of South Dakota Service Dogs. The check was presented on Sat., Nov. 12, during a quarterly Open House at Rapid City's Chapter 3. South Dakota Service dogs was founded in 2021 by Tony Russell and his wife Eleanor and works to connect service members and first responders with service dogs that can help restore the quality of life they deserve.

## WEST RIVER HOSPITAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

by Jack C Post II, Hospital Transportation Service Coordinator  
Ft Meade VAMC

by Gwen Albers galbers@capjournal.com  
Oct 31, 2022 Updated Dec 8, 2022



### Sully pilot flies Pierre veteran to VA in Sturgis

Sully County pilot Chuck Trumble, right, flies Pierre's Jim McPhee to his Friday appointment at the Fort Meade VA Medical Center in Sturgis. Volunteer drivers normally transport veterans the 175 miles from Pierre to the medical center, but without any drivers, the Disabled American Veterans had to find an alternate solution. Chuck Trumble

With the loss of volunteers to drive Pierre area military veterans to Fort Meade VA Medical Center in Sturgis, Jack Post got creative.

The hospital transportation coordinator for Disabled American Veterans, Post resorted to another non-profit that transports folks to medical appointments — Angel Flight.

Sully County pilot Chuck Trumble responded to the Angel Flight request and flew Pierre's Jim McPhee to the medical center on Friday. Trumble donated his time, his plane and the fuel.

"That was the first time we did that," Post said.

McPhee loved it.

"I didn't realize how many hills there were until you looked down," he said.

Before COVID-19, DAV had five volunteers from the Pierre area to drive veterans the 175 miles to Sturgis. Lorin Lawrence of Fort Pierre, the last of those five, retired on June 30 due to arthritis in his shoulders, leaving the DAV with no drivers.

A member of the National Guard for 12 years and a retired maintenance worker and custodian, Lawrence, 74, had started volunteering in his late 50s. Lawrence was driving to the VA for his own appointments and offered to take others.

Without drivers, Post turned to Angel Flight, a non-profit involving pilots who provide free air transportation for those in need of medical treatment. Pilots like Trumble receive a tax write-off for their donation.

"I contacted Angel Flight and put in a flight request," Post said. "It

takes two to three weeks. His (McPhee's) primary care doctor at Fort Meade cleared him to fly."



Renee Schnyder, a volunteer driver from Spearfish for Disabled American Veterans, left, pilot Chuck Trumble and veteran Jim McPhee at Sturgis Municipal Airport on Friday.

"When I found out he (Trumble) was a veteran, I was even more filled with gratitude," Post added. "Aviation fuel is \$6.60 a gallon. That in itself was rather expensive. And the fact that he's flown some Angel Flights for non-veterans, I was just overjoyed and thanked the Lord for this veteran."

Trumble, 70, served in the U.S. Air Force for 8.5 years and in the Army National Guard for 17 years. He started flying during his first year at South Dakota State University, where he studied mechanized agriculture. He keeps his Cessna Cardinal at Onida Municipal Airport.

"I check for flights that are close enough so it makes it reasonable for me to fly," Trumble said. "When you own an airplane and don't fly it enough, the cost per hour is much more. Being able to use the plane as a tax donation helps a little bit financially."

McPhee, 78, couldn't have been more grateful. The retiree served in the Air Force from 1963 to 1969 and spent a year in Vietnam. He's been seeking medical care at the VA for nearly 50 years and suffers from Parkinson's disease, a disorder of the central nervous system that affects movement, often including tremors. McPhee gave up driving a vehicle 10 years ago.

Flying cut the travel time to Sturgis in half.

"When you are traveling at 120 to 130 miles per hour and are at 7,000 feet in the air, you don't realize how fast you're traveling," McPhee said.

It was the first time in 50 years he'd flown in a small plane.

"I was very, very comfortable with the pilot. We were talking back and forth through the microphone," McPhee said.



## NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER SUPERVISOR REPORT

by Owen Richards

The SD DAV NSO Office would like wish everyone a Merry Christmas, and to remind everyone to stay safe and enjoy their time with family and friends.

I would also like to take a moment to discuss BVA hearings and the types of BVA hearing choices and the

location in which they are held within our state. The BVA has made it very clear that the only location authorized for a video hearing is the Sioux Falls Regional Office, located in Sioux Falls, SD.

Also, as a reminder the BVA is converting all in person type hearings to either video or virtual types, the in person travel hearings are no longer utilized nor a viable selection on the new appeals form (VA Form 10182).

We would also like to encourage and remind everyone to keep in mind that when it comes to BVA hearings that the Veteran/ Claimant can request a virtual hearing, which are currently moving along much faster than the other choices for BVA hearings at this time.

Virtual hearings are done in a similar format as Telehealth appointments. You must understand that in order to choose a virtual hearing that it must be requested in writing to the BVA in a timely manner. You can do this by contacting your nearest DAV NSO Office.

Also note that the Veteran must have access to either a smartphone, tablet, or computer, and be proficient in using the device in order to use the emailed link that the BVA will send to the Veterans email in order to join the virtual BVA hearing with the Veterans Law Judge.

We strongly advise anyone not sure of which route to choose, to contact their nearest DAV office and discuss their choices with a NSO right away.

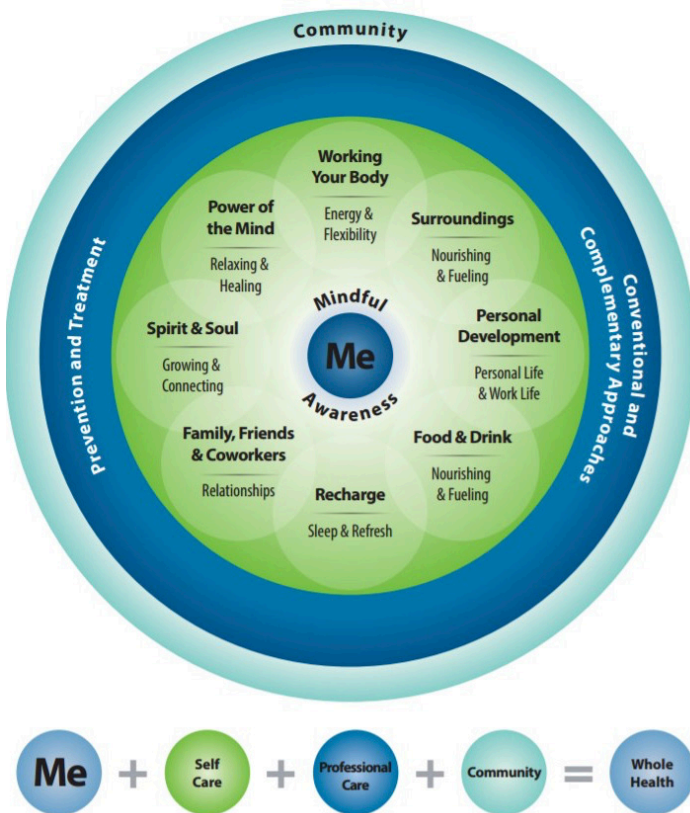
If necessary, the SD DAV NSO Office can be reached by:

- Phone: 605-333-6896 between 8:00 am – 4:00 pm
- Email: [dav.vbasux@va.gov](mailto:dav.vbasux@va.gov)

The Sioux Falls DAV NSO Office hopes everyone had a Merry Christmas, and to remind everyone to stay safe and enjoy their time with family and friends.

## VA SIOUX FALLS HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Kristin Aeilts, RN | Whole Health and Employee Whole Health Coordinator



The Sioux Falls VA Health Care System is transforming to a Whole Health Model of Care. This approach is a shift from “what’s the matter with you?” to “what matters to you?”. When we ask this question, our goal is to get to know each Veteran as a unique individual so we can offer meaningful tools and resources. One of

the tools Whole Health offers is teaching self-care skills. By learning and adopting self-care skills, Veterans can improve their health and well-being so they can live their life to its fullest. One of the self-care tools taught in VA is how to rest and recharge.

We all know the importance of a good nights sleep. Sleep helps us heal, it helps our brain learn and grow and can enhance our performance. When we do not get enough sleep, we may not think as clearly and find ourselves irritable and grumpy. Living life to its fullest and doing what matters most is enhanced with good sleep practices. The Sioux Falls VA offers Veterans a variety of options to help with better sleep. One of those options is Cognitive Behavior Therapy for Insomnia. This therapy helps people change sleep behaviors, reduce unhelpful thoughts, set a sleep schedule and more. Anyone can learn these skills and how to get better sleeping through the VA website. Check it out for yourself by visiting <https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/sleep101/index.asp>

There are also things we can do during our waking hours to help us recharge and relax. It is matter of finding out what fits you the best. It can be as simple as actually taking breaks at work. At the Sioux Falls VA we teach mindfulness, meditation, relaxation, yoga, Tai Chi and more. There is enough research and evidence to show these complementary and integrative health interventions are helpful in calming and relaxing the mind, body and spirit. Anyone can benefit from these mind and body tools by visiting the VA’s blog series #LiveWholeHealth.

What matters most to you?

For more information please contact:

Kristin Aeilts, RN ,RYT200

Whole Health and Employee Whole Health Coordinator

605-336-3230, ext. 6189

[Kristin.aeilts@va.gov](mailto:Kristin.aeilts@va.gov)



# OPERATION: KEEP THE PROMISE

DAV | 2023

## DAV's Critical Policy Goals

- Correct inequities and provide parity in compensation benefits for veterans and survivors
- Implement the PACT Act and address gaps in toxic-exposure benefits
- Ensure equity in VA care, services and benefits for women, LGBTQ+ and minority veterans
- Provide a full spectrum of long-term care options for service-disabled and aging veterans
- Bolster mental health resources to ensure continued progress in reducing veteran suicide
- Expand the VA's capacity to deliver timely, high-quality health care to veterans

DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: keeping our promise to America's veterans. DAV does this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; providing employment resources to veterans and their families and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a non-profit organization with more than 1 million veteran members, was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932.

enact compensation-level increases commensurate with those findings.

### Implement the PACT Act and address gaps in toxic-exposure benefits

DAV urges Congress to conduct oversight of all disability claims, including those related to the PACT Act and require the VA to provide data on claims granted and denied, quality of exams and processing, and transparency regarding quality assurance.

DAV urges Congress to enact legislation that concedes exposures to radiation, jet fuel and chemical weapons at K2; provides for studies; and recognizes presumptive diseases related thereto. Additionally, K2 veterans should be provided eligibility to health care under toxic exposures, per section 1710, title 38, U.S. Code.

DAV urges Congress to enact legislation to remove the VA dose estimate requirement for radiation exposure. This will provide parity with the governmental RECA program and treat veterans' radiation exposure claims on equal footing with civilians who were not participants but only downwind from nuclear testing.

### Ensure equity in VA care, services and benefits for women, LGBTQ+ and minority veterans

DAV urges the VA to:

- Improve methodologies for collecting and analyzing data to ensure health equity among all veterans.
- Mandate staff education and training to eliminate disparities in use of evidence-based treatments for certain conditions.
- Improve outreach to recruit women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups for VA research projects.

DAV urges the VA to:

- Promote strategies and care plans for meeting the unique needs of women, LGBTQ+ and minority veteran populations through targeted outreach efforts, special programming and the Veterans Experience Office.
- Ensure that all veteran subpopulations have representation on federal advisory

Rev. 11/22



by Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director

### DAV LEGISLATION: PRIORITIES

#### Correct inequities and provide parity in compensation benefits

#### for veterans and survivors

DAV urges Congress to enact legislation to repeal the inequitable offset between rightfully earned military retired pay and VA disability compensation for all veterans, including medically retired veterans.

DAV urges Congress to afford justice for veterans by enacting legislation that allows them to keep military separation payments based on their service, which differs from VA disability compensation.

DAV urges Congress to enact legislation that would index the rate of compensation for DIC payments to 55% of a 100% service-disabled veteran with a spouse to achieve parity with similar compensation federal employees' survivors receive.

DAV urges Congress to enact legislation for a study to address the negative impacts on veterans' quality of life and



committees, in the VA's strategic plans and internal programming.

- Should be authorized by Congress to use peer support specialists throughout its service lines, with a focus on diversity among peer specialists.

DAV urges the VA to:

- Conduct sensitivity training for front-line staff and create programs to specifically address barriers to care and improve patient satisfaction for women, minority and LGBTQ+ veterans.
- Ensure adequate resources for specialized care coordinators.
- Mandate certain training and data collection on quality and access for community partners to ensure consistent quality care delivery.

DAV urges the VA to:

- Continue its Stop Harassment training efforts and White Ribbon campaign to address harassment throughout the system.

- Ensure infrastructure and environment of care changes are made that enhance recognition, privacy, safety and dignity for vulnerable veterans.

### **Provide a full spectrum of long-term care options for service disabled and aging veterans**

DAV urges Congress to expand mandatory eligibility for long-term nursing home care to service-connected veterans rated 50% and 60%.

DAV urges Congress to increase resources for modernization and expansion of VA Community Living Centers and State Veterans Homes to meet specialized needs of seriously disabled veterans.

DAV urges the VA to expand access to home- and community-based programs, particularly veteran-directed care and medical foster homes.

DAV urges the VA to revise eligibility rules and strengthen due process rights for veterans and caregivers in the VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers.

### **Bolster mental health resources to ensure continued progress in reducing veteran suicide**

DAV urges Congress to continue to provide additional resources for mental health services, if they are deemed necessary, for VHA to both strengthen and improve its suicide prevention efforts.

DAV urges Congress to appropriately fund the VA's lethal-means safety campaign and support similar programs that show promise in reducing suicide among veterans.

DAV urges VHA to reevaluate its screening instruments and programming to capture more of the unidentified veterans at risk for suicide and improve treatment options and programs for veterans with substance use disorders.

DAV urges the VA to focus on recruiting and maintaining appropriate staffing levels for mental health services to meet demand and ensure quality services for veterans.

DAV urges the VA Community Care Network to require all providers to complete the same suicide prevention training and lethal-means safety counseling mandated for VA providers.

DAV urges Congress to require the VA to include comparable quality metrics in its scheduling system so that veteran patients can make informed decisions when choosing care options.

### **Expand the VA's capacity to deliver timely, high-quality health care to veterans**

DAV urges the VA to accelerate its recruitment and retention efforts and expedite its hiring and onboarding processes in order to expand its capacity to deliver high-quality health services to our nation's veterans.

DAV urges Congress and the VA to create a strategic plan to modernize VA infrastructure and bolster construction funds for health care facilities to increase the VA's internal capacity.

DAV urges Congress to provide rigorous oversight of the VA's new electronic health record system, to ensure that patient care, safety and other mission-critical work, including data collection and research, is not negatively affected.

DAV urges the VA to carefully study the efficacy and effectiveness of virtual health care to determine its optimal use in expanding access to care and to ensure the best health outcomes for veterans.

DAV urges the VA to maintain sufficient health care capacity to meet its Fourth Mission functions during national emergencies while also ensuring that veterans continue to have uninterrupted and timely access to VA health care.

### **Please Support S. 4951, the REMOVE Copays Act**

Dear Friend,  
Sen. Jon Ossoff (Ga.) introduced S. 4951, the Reduce and Eliminate Mental Health Outpatient Veteran (REMOVE) Copays Act. This bill would eliminate medical care copayments for veterans' first three mental health visits in a calendar year. An identical bill, H.R. 7589, has already been approved in the House.

Overcoming the stigma of seeking mental health treatment is, in itself, a victory. For some veterans, copayments are a significant deterrent to seeking medically necessary care. Financial obstacles should not be a barrier to receiving potentially life-saving mental health services and treatment.

DAV supports this important legislation in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 022, which calls for elimination or reduction of medical care copayments for service-connected veterans.

Please contact your senators and ask them to cosponsor S. 4951, the REMOVE Copays Act.

Thank you for participating in the DAV Commander's Action Network.

## VA BLACK HILLS CARE SYSTEM

by *Thomas Johnson* | Public Affairs Officer

Thank you, DAV members, for your continued partnership in providing high-quality care to VA Black Hills Veterans. In South Dakota, we have around 61,000 Veterans who have contributed to the preservation of our freedom. We have a higher percentage of Veterans in South Dakota than the rest of the nation. We are committed to honoring our promise to you and the Veterans of SD.

Over the past two years, we have seen an increase in services provided and workload. VA Black Hills has increased its workload by over 6% in the last year. The Rapid City CBOC has seen a 23% increase in Veterans over the last 2 years and a 5% increase in Veterans visits over the past year. VA Black Hills is actively seeking to grow its enrollments so that every eligible Veteran knows we are here to provide them the services they have earned.

VA Black Hills is currently reaching out to eligible Veterans who are not using VA care and providing them with services that the VA can offer. We invite eligible Veterans to attend an enrollment event and can enroll them in VA and schedule their first appointment. Four Enrollment Expos were held in November, and we hope to grow the program and expand to rural areas of SD.

The new Rapid City VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic (CBOC) is on time and on budget. We are looking forward to caring for Veterans at this new state-of-the-art facility next summer. New features to the CBOC:

- Increasing our Clinic from approx. 14,000 sqft to over 45,000 sqft.
- Geo-Thermal- The new clinic is using best practices in green technology to provide energy-efficient solutions to heat and cool the building via geothermal pumps.
- Zero incline entrance- No curb, easy to access for wheelchairs.
- Covered drop-off location- Zero entry loading and unloading zone in front of the building

Additionally, new services have been added to the CBOC which will allow us to expand to meet the needs of over 7,800 Veterans in this Community where currently we are able to treat 5,000. This is an increase of 36%. New services provided:

- Lab: Increase in staffing and chemistry analyzer. This allows Rapid City to provide rapid lab results where we have, in the past, had to send labs to Fort Meade.
- Audiology is doubling in size. (From one to two audiologists).
- Radiology: X-ray, Mobile CT and MRI. Actively pursuing Mammography.

The Fort Meade Campus started using a new program called GI Genius. This program assists doctors in polyp detection during colonoscopies. We are the ONLY facility in South Dakota offering this new technology to patients. Private facilities in the state do not have it yet. VA purchased 115 units nationwide and our site was chosen to use it. GI Genius is a great tool in providing the best possible exams to our Veterans. GI Genius provides artificial intelligence-assisted colonoscopies. Performing AI-assisted colonoscopies takes no additional time. 90% of patients with colon cancer will beat it if it's caught early. Screening assisted with artificial intelligence is another way for patients to stack the odds in their favor of catching precancerous polyps before the disease advances and spreads to the lymph nodes.

VA Black Hills is hiring! Last month, VA hosted hiring events at every VA Healthcare System to streamline the hiring process and quickly onboard new employees. This hiring event was used to recruit and onboard new Providers, Nurses, Housekeepers, Nutrition and Food Service workers, Social Workers, and Medical Support Assistance (MSAs). These are all critical need positions within VA. By decreasing the amount of time, it takes to onboard prospective employees, we can rapidly hire these critical need positions and get them to work. We are happy to report 131 new employees were hired at VA Black Hills during this hiring event.

Finally, thanks to all of the DAV volunteers and partners. Stay in touch with us on our social media channels like Facebook and Instagram to keep up to date with everything going on with Veteran care!

## DAV & AUXILIARY CONVENTION LODGING AND REGISTRATION MAY 5-6TH 2023

The DAV Department of South Dakota 83rd Annual Department and 71st Auxiliary State Convention will be held May 5-6th, 2023, at the DAV Department of South Dakota Headquarters, 1519 W. 51st, St, in Sioux Falls, South Dakota - (605) 332-6866.

**LODGING:** The Comfort Inn & Suites, 3721 W. Avera Drive, Sioux Falls, SD 57108, at (605) 275-9577 or (605) 275-9585. **YOU MUST MAKE YOUR OWN HOTEL RESERVATIONS!** Rooms have been reserved under the name of DAV. Please mention this when making your reservations - Group Account - 4485675. More rooms can be added if an early turnout warrants it. Your reservation **MUST BE MADE BY** April 1, 2023.

**REGISTRATION, LUNCHEON AND BANQUET:** Prior to April 1, 2023 - \$80.00 which includes registration fee, two (2) Lunches, one (1) Friday Evening Meal and one (1) Saturday Evening Commander's Banquet. Full registration cost after April 1, 2023 is \$90.

No refunds on meals after April 1, 2023 and after this date individual meal tickets will be sold separately. Forget-Me-Not Luncheon is \$20.00, Awards Luncheon is \$25, Friday Evening Meal is \$20.00 and Saturday Evening Commander's Banquet is \$35.00. Cutoff date for meals is April 25, 2023. Any special meals must be requested at the time of registration.

### Mark you meal selections here:

- Forget-Me-Not Lunch       Awards Lunch  
 Friday Evening Meal       Saturday Evening Banquet

**Make registration check payable to:** DAV Ch 1 Convention

**Mail registration form and check to:**  
DAV Chapter 1 Convention Committee  
1519 W 51st St, Sioux Falls, SD 57105

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter/Unit Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## 2023 DAV SD CONVENTION RAFFLE

The DAV Headquarters in South Dakota have received the following for the 2023 DAV South Dakota Convention Raffle:

- \$1,000 DAV AHM Ch No. 1
- \$3,000 DAV Rapid City Ch No. 3
- \$100 DAV Watertown Ch No. 6
- \$1,000 DAV Northern Hills Ch No. 11
- \$200 DAV Swanson – O’Connor Ch No. 13
- \$50 DAV Pierre Oahe Ch No. 18
- \$500 DAV Milbank-Sisseton Ch No. 19
- \$100 DAV Brookings Chapter No. 22
- \$250 DAV Davison County Ch No. 27
- \$100 Korean War Display, LLC
- \$100 Gene Murphy
- \$100 Dick Turnwall
- Vietnam Vets: Still Coming Home Book AHM Ch No. 1
- Box with Wine, Glasses, Cutting Boards, Cheese, Cracker Gene Murphy
- Handmade Wooden American Flag Dan Francis

The DAV still invites Chapters, Auxiliary Units, members, businesses, and corporations to donate prizes for the 2023 DAV Convention Raffle Project. Please contact the DAV Headquarters in Sioux Falls, to let us know what is being donated.

Thank you for your assistance towards the DAV Department of South Dakota Service Programs and Hospital Transportation Network. These programs assist our members and Chapters in South Dakota.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### JANUARY

- 1st – Sunday** ..... “HAPPY NEW YEAR”
- 2nd – Monday** ..... OFFICE CLOSED
- 10th – Tuesday** ..... South Dakota State of the State Address – By Governor Noem – Noon  
98th South Dakota Legislative Session Starts -- Pierre
- 11th – Wednesday** ..... VA Stakeholders Conference Call – Sioux Falls VA – 10am  
SD Veterans Council – Post 8 TAL – Pierre – 2-5 pm  
SDDVA/SD Veterans Council Legislative Reception – Post 8 The American Legion –  
Pierre – 5:30-7:30 pm
- 14th – Saturday** ..... CHAPTER 1 ANNUAL OYSTER AND CHILI FEED –  
DAV HOME 1519 W. 51ST ST., SIOUX FALLS - NOON
- 16th – Monday** ..... MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY – OFFICE CLOSED
- 26th – Thursday** ..... Veterans Appreciation Night – Ray’s Corner - Brookings
- 27th – Friday** ..... International Holocaust Remembrance Day
- 31st – Tuesday** ..... DAV DEPT OF SOUTH DAKOTA CONVENTION AWARDS DUE

### FEBRUARY

- 1st – Wednesday** ..... NATIONAL FREEDOM DAY
- 8th – Wednesday** ..... VA Stakeholders Conference Call – Sioux Falls VA – 10:00 am
- 10th – Friday** ..... DAV CHAPTER/DEPARTMENT SERVICE OFFICERS  
TRAINING SIGN-UP DEADLINE
- 11th – Saturday** ..... Veterans Community Project Come Bowl – Sport Bowl  
Sioux Falls – 1– 4pm
- 14th – Tuesday** ..... HAPPY VALENTINE’S DAY
- 20th – Monday** ..... PRESIDENT’S DAY – OFFICE CLOSED
- 22nd – Wednesday** ..... Ash Wednesday
- 24th – Friday** ...DEPARTMENT CONSTITUTION AND BYLAW CHANGE PROPOSALS  
DEPARTMENT RESOLUTION PROPOSALS  
DEPARTMENT FUND RAISING PROJECT PROPOSALS  
DEPARTMENT ENDORSEMENT FOR DEPARTMENT OFFICERS
- 26th - Sunday** .....2023 DAV National Midwinter Conference Begins - Arlington, VA
- 27th -- Monday** ..... DAV NOMINATIONS DUE FOR GEORGE H. SEAL & JESSE  
BROWN  
MEMORIAL YOUTH SCHOLARSHIPS  
DAV NOMINATIONS DUE FOR NATIONAL COMMANDER’S AWARDS

### MARCH

- 1st – Wednesday** ... 2023 DAV National Mid-Winter Conference Ends – Arlington, VA
- 3rd – Friday** ..... “Star Spangled Banner” made U.S. National Anthem – 1931
- 6th – Monday** ..... PERSION GULF WAR VETERANS DAY
- 8th – Wednesday** ..... VA Stakeholders Conference Call – Sioux Falls VA – 10:00 am
- 9th – Thursday** ..... 98th SD Legislative Session Ends
- 12th – Sunday** ..... Daylight Savings Time
- 17th – Friday** ..... “HAPPY ST. PATRICK’S DAY”
- 25th – 31st.** National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic – Snowmass Village, CO
- 27th – Monday** ..... Reserved for Consideration of Gubernatorial Vetoes
- 29th – Wednesday** ..... Vietnam Veterans Day



**WE WANT YOU INVOLVED IN THE DAV PROGRAMS IN 2023!**

**DAV NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER**

**OWEN RICHARDS & MATT KISTLER**

**EMAIL:** dav.vbasux@va.gov

**VA REGIONAL OFFICE**

2501 W 22nd • VARO 101

Sioux Falls, SD 57117

Phone: 605.333.6896

**CHAPTER MEETINGS**

**Sioux Falls - DAV Club**

5:30pm, 2nd Tuesday

1519 W 51st St, Sioux Falls

**Rapid City - DAV Club**

7:30pm 2nd Wednesday

101 E Madison St, Rapid City

**Watertown - American Legion**

7:15pm 2nd Monday

1412 9th Ave SW, Watertown

**Piedmont - American Legion**

7pm 2nd Thursday

101 Pine St, Piedmont

**Aberdeen**

Plymouth Congressional Church

7pm 2nd Tuesday

431 W Melgaard Road, Aberdeen

**Pierre - American Legion**

7pm 3rd Tuesday

520 S Pierre Street, Pierre

**Milbank-Sisseton**

10:30am 1st Saturday

Pizza Ranch, Milbank

**Brookings - American Legion**

7pm 2nd Tuesday

1229 Western Ave, Brookings

**Mitchell - VFW**

7:30pm Last Tuesday

215 N. Main St., Mitchell

**DONATIONS TO SERVICE AND LEGISLATIVE PROGRAMS**

*by Dick Turnwall, Chairman of Income Research Committee*

As your Department Chairman of Income Research Committee, I ask you to consider a donation to the DAV Department Service and Legislative Programs of your first month's COLA increase. This year 2023 the Cost-of-Living Adjustment was 8.7% beginning January 1, 2023. All the donated funds will be used for assisting the Services for Veterans and Legislative Support for our Veterans. In FY 2022 we received donations of \$3,885.67 from 17 members from their first month's compensation check. Chairman Turnwall invites ALL MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE. Your support would be very appreciated by the Disabled American Veterans of South Dakota. THANK YOU for your commitment and support.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_

STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

CHAPTER #: \_\_\_\_\_

AMOUNT OF DONATION \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Send all remittance payable to:  
DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
1519 W 51st St  
SIOUX FALLS, SD 57105**

**THANK YOU!**

**BULLETIN SCHEDULE**

**APRIL: Submittal Deadline:**

March 10th

**JULY: Submittal Deadline:**

June 10th

**OCTOBER: Submittal Deadline:**

September 10th

**JANUARY: Submittal Deadline:**

December 10th

**Email all reports to:**

admin@davsd.org

**BULLETIN BOOSTER  
ADVERTISEMENT PROGRAM  
FY 2022-2023**

The Department Bulletin will be published four times this fiscal year (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023). We would like to invite all DAV Members, Auxiliary Members, Chapters, Units and businesses to sign up as a Bulletin Booster Advertiser. Your name will be published in each issue for only \$20 donation. Please help defray the costs of publishing by supporting YOUR organization by contribution BULLETIN BOOSTER ADVERTISEMENT PROGRAM.

**THANK YOU!**

**Chapter No. 1 Sioux Falls**

Sioux Falls Chapter No. 1 (\$1,000)

Dan Francis

Gaylord Helmbrecht

John Huntington

Jessie Kaciuba (\$50)

Gene Murphy (\$120)

Helen Parr

Ronnie Simonsen

Tim Walsh (\$125)

**Chapter No. 6 Watertown**

Don Barrow (\$100)

**Chapter No. 11 Northern Hills**

(\$500)

**Chapter No. 13 Aberdeen**

Swanson-O'Connor No. 13 (\$275)

Mark Wolf

**Chapter No. 18 Pierre**

Auxiliary Oahe Unit No. 18

**Chapter No. 19 Milbank/Sisseton**

(\$100)

**Chapter No. 22 Brookings**

Paul Hanson

Robert and Kilsuk Hill (\$50)