

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

### **Cameron Smith**

These reports are a chance for us to pause, take stock and evaluate the last quarter, and also consider our efforts going forward. Every time, I am both amazed at what our team has accomplished and also the significant work that remains.

We are fortunate to have an incredible staff at ODVA dedicated to our mission of serving and honoring our veterans. Here is a small sample of highlights from the last three months that make me proud:

- Eric Belt and his Veteran Services team reported 2013 VA Expenditure numbers and Oregon now draws down \$1.1 billion (\$92 million every month) in disability compensation and pensions for our veterans and their families – an amazing increase of over \$200 million from 2012.
- Mitch Sparks' in Veteran Services continues to do amazing work training and certifying County Veteran Service Officers (CVSOs). Thanks to his program research and analysis, we have identified a significant need for more training resources given many new CVSOs. With a lot of cross team work, we will be teeing up an immediate request for additional training funds to the Legislature in May and make the effort a top priority for our next biennial budget.
- Cody Cox and the Veterans' Home Loan team have funded \$12.6 million in loans so far in 2014. This outpaces our start to 2013 and puts us on an excellent track for the year. The program continues to be a powerful benefit for veterans as well as an essential part of funding our core operations at the department.
- Nicole Hoeft, Marc Huchette and our Public Information team continue to drive veteran engagement across all communication channels. Above and beyond their day-to-day efforts, they have been instrumental in planning and executing a Veterans Summit co-sponsored with the Oregon National Guard to better connect with veteran providers. We would not have the summit if not for their efforts.
- Steve Reed and his Business Services team ensured a seamless Memorial Day set up for our ceremony to honor Gold Star Families who have lost loved ones in the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.
- Dallas Swafford hosted a packed house at the Oregon Veterans Home in The Dalles for a Memorial Day event dedicating I-84 to our Vietnam Veterans.

- Ed Van Dyke, with the support of our cross team, also ensured we reviewed and adapted our key performance measures to ensure thoughtful and useful measures for our work going forward.

Our team continues to impress and this week alone, I get to highlight their work to the Governor at an event in Roseburg, state leaders in the Legislature, service providers at our summit, and the Federal VA Under Secretary for Benefits, Allison Hickey.

At the same time, we know our work for our veterans and their families is just beginning. One of our team's main efforts over the last quarter has been our strategic planning.

Our goal has been to develop a strategic framework to help guide our work. We have built it as a 5-year framework to begin to immediately impact our work today in 2014 and to help guide our efforts over the next two biennia (2015-17 and 2017-19).

We have been actively sharing our work with the veterans' community and our partners. We have briefed the Governor, state legislators, National Service Organization leaders, the Oregon Congressional Offices, the Association of Oregon Counties, County Veteran Service Officers, the Oregon National Guard, and veteran service providers and partners.

All have been enthusiastic, and most importantly, willing to help us continue to improve the plan and further refine strategies.

The framework covers our Vision / Mission / Values as well as our Goals/ Objectives / Strategies. Below you will find the highlights. We'll share the full brief with you so you can see all of the strategies as well.

Vision – Veterans and their families thrive in Oregon.

Mission – ODVA serves and honors veterans through our leadership, advocacy and strong partnerships.

Values – Respect / Integrity / Stewardship / Excellence

Goals / Objectives

Target Veteran Services – Serve more veterans and serve them better

Mobilize Partnerships – Leverage all resources available to veterans

Drive Veteran Engagement – Amplify awareness of resources and build the Oregon veteran brand

Invigorate Core Operations – Build a better, stronger and more durable department for future generations through our responsible, resourceful and creative management

I look forward to seeing you all in June and thank you in advance for your continued service on the Advisory Committee and your commitment to our veterans and their families.

**FINANCIAL SERVICES DIVISION**  
**Bruce Shriver, Chief Financial Officer**

**2014 Legislative Update Relating to ODVA's 2013-15 Budget**

The 2014 Legislative Session adjourned and took the following actions that impacted the Department's 2013-15 biennial budget. First, the Department received approximately \$6.2 million of additional other fund expenditure authority to help prepare, open and operate the Lebanon Veteran's Home during the current biennium. The Lebanon Veterans' Home is expected to begin accepting residents in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2014.

Second, the Department's budget had previously been subject to a 2% "hold back" of general funds due to uncertainties surrounding the economy and state agency budgets. During the 2014 Legislative Session, action was taken that restored approximately \$44 thousand dollars (out of ~ the \$175 thousand that had previously been held back). The \$44 thousand in restored funds increased available funding primarily to County Veteran Service Offices, National Service Organizations and to Department administered programs.

Third, the Department's request for \$300,000 of federal funds expenditure limitation to assist with helping to meet the transportation needs of veterans from highly rural counties, seeking medical care at the United States Department of Veterans' Affairs medical centers was approved. The Department on behalf of six rural counties, submitted a grant request to the USDVA for this transportation assistance but most likely will not know whether this grant has been approved until September 2014. In addition, two additional counties may seek to be added to the federal grant application, which could revise the total grant request to \$400,000. If the USDVA does not approve the Department's grant request, the requested additional expenditure authority will not be used.

**2015-17 Department Budget Development**

The Department is currently in the process of developing its Agency Request Budget (ARB) for the 2015-17 biennium. The ARB request is due for submission to the Department of Administrative Services, Chief Financial Office by August 1, 2014. Once submitted, the Department's ARB will be reviewed/prioritized and ultimately some or all of it will be incorporated into the Governor's Recommended 2015-17 Budget that will be published on or about December 1, 2014.

## Early Redemption of Department Bonds

In June 2014, the Department redeemed portions of its Series 73H and Series 92B bonds via optional/special redemptions (*see below*).

<b>Bond Series</b>	<b>Component Amount</b>	<i>Interest Rates</i>
73H	\$ 4,800,000	variable
92B	\$ 9,315,000	4.625%

## Unaudited Quarterly Financial Statements

The March 31, 2014 unaudited financial statements show a fiscal year to date reduction in net position in the Veterans' Loan Program of approximately \$(1.4) million. This figure does not include year-end adjustments such as updated arbitrage rebate calculations, but included in this amount is an increase in the fair value of investments of approximately \$0.06 million. The same period for the prior fiscal year also showed a decrease in net position of approximately \$(2.1) million, with a fair value decrease of investments of approximately \$(0.02) million.

The Veterans' Home Program shows an increase in net position of approximately \$16.2 million for the fiscal year to date, compared to an increase in net position of approximately \$0.8 million for the same period of the prior fiscal year. Included in these figures were operating transfers and capital contributions into the Veterans' Home Program from the Veterans' Home Trust Fund and federal grant monies which totaled approximately \$13.9 million for the first nine months of fiscal year 2014, compared to approximately \$0.1 million in the first nine months of fiscal year 2013.

Net assets held in trust for protected individuals in the Conservatorship Program's Private-Purpose Trust Fund was approximately \$25.3 million as of March 31, 2014. Net assets held in trust for protected individuals was approximately \$23.7 million as of March 31, 2013.

Assets held in trust for the Veterans' Home Trust Fund were approximately \$1.2 million as of March 31, 2014. Assets held in trust as of March 31, 2013 were approximately \$1.0 million.

### **Lebanon Veterans' Home (LVH) Update**

Construction of the LVH has been proceeding in earnest and it is anticipated that substantial completion will occur by the end of August 2014. The LVH project continues to be built within its budgeted costs and is proceeding on schedule. The Department plans to begin accepting new veteran residents into the LVH during the 4th quarter of calendar year 2014.

### **Cashiers**

The Cashiers Unit processed and made the following Sinking Account deposits:

Jan 2014	\$5,002,604	Daily Business Day Average	\$238,219
Feb 2014	\$3,129,753	Daily Business Day Average	\$164,724
Mar 2014	\$5,170,691	Daily Business Day Average	\$244,740.

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## **VETERANS SERVICES DIVISION**

**Eric Belt, Administrator**

The Veterans' Services Division is comprised of five programs: Conservatorship; Salem and Portland Claims; Educational Aid; Training Certification & Outreach; and Emergency Financial Assistance. All programs directly relate to the agency mission and affect Oregon veterans (approximately 330,000).

### **Projects**

#### **Women Veteran Conference**

The Oregon Women Veteran Conference was held March 28 and 29, 2014 in Eugene, OR at the Hilton, approximately 330 female veterans attended. We raised approximately \$4,000 over the weekend to donate back to the next conference.

#### **Highly Rural Veterans Transportation Grant**

In February, the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA) applied for a federal grant to fund access to care for veterans in highly rural areas, in an amount not to exceed \$300,000, with an anticipated notice of award by September 2014.

The goal of the program is for states to leverage innovative approaches to transport veterans in highly rural areas to Veterans Administration Medical Centers, using existing local partnerships and resources where feasible. At present, the only organized transportation to a VA Medical Center in many of Oregon's rural counties is the Disabled American Veterans van system or veteran volunteers who transport veterans to appointments.

The need for reliable transportation is compounded due to limitations on the number and frequency of medical appointments that can be accommodated within the VA medical system; when veterans are able to obtain an appointment, it is imperative that they attend the appointment, and be on time. The highly rural counties in Oregon that applied for the grant were: Baker, Gilliam, Grant, Sherman, Morrow, and Wheeler. Outcomes will include factors such as an increase in: the number of trips and total veterans served. The grant is for a period of one year.

In May we coordinated with Malheur and Wallowa Counties to file for an additional \$100,000 in grant dollars in support of highly rural veterans transportation.

## **Conservatorship**

### **Kelly Breshears, Manager**

The central role of the conservatorship program is to manage the financial affairs of disabled incompetent veterans, their dependents, and survivors.

We have 145 protected persons under conservatorship at this reporting. We have received 3 new conservatorship cases and have motions pending court approval for 4 additional new cases. We also have an additional 3 Representative Payee cases pending appointment.

The Conservatorship staff attended the 2014 Guardianship Conservatorship Association of Oregon Annual Conference. We had training on Medicare presented here in the office by Donna Delikat, Field Officer with Senior Health Insurance Benefits Assistance (SHIBA). In addition all staff attended threat training presented by the Oregon State Police here in the building.

All staff will be attending training on June 6<sup>th</sup> which will focus on Alzheimer's, dementia, and strokes, as well as a presentation by the Tuality Center for Geriatric Psychiatry.

The Conservatorship Manager and trust Office Jordan Killian attended a monthly fraud meeting held at the US Court House in Portland on May 8<sup>th</sup>. This meeting provided a great opportunity to educate officials from multiple agencies in the metro about our program and the services we provide. Conservatorship will continue to attend these meetings in the future.

The last eligible member of the conservatorship unit sat for and passed testing to become a National Certified Guardian.

Conservatorship staff conducted 83 field interviews during this time period and responded to the following:

VA Inquiries: 35

Incoming court inquiries/motions filed by ODVA: 4

## **Portland Claims Review and Appeals**

### **Martin Ornelas, Manager**

The Portland Claims Office mission encompasses three core objectives: Support of the County Veterans Service officers through training, guidance, quality assurance and appellate representation; advocacy for our veterans, dependents and /or survivors in pursuit of benefits; and interoperability with the U.S. Department of Veterans Portland Regional Office.

### **Hearings**

- March - 34 hearings scheduled, 2 of were BVA video hearings.
- April - 23 hearing were scheduled, 68 were BVA video hearings
- May – 25 hearings were schedule, 2 were BVA video hearings

## Service

- March – 54 veteran were assisted
- April - 91 veterans were assisted
- May – 45 veterans have been assisted as of this date.

## Retro

- March – \$6,235,627.65
- April – \$5,732,619.64
- May – est. \$4 million

Claims	PDX	Counties
• March –	17	729
• April –	22	435

Appeals	Filed	Denied	Granted
• March –	5	0	0
• April –	5	0	2

## New POA

- March – 701
- April – 718
- May – 538 AOTD

## Programs

### Projects: Package this Claim

- Mar/Apr/May – According to the last D2D meeting the VA is scheduled to start receiving claims electronically on Oct 2014; this date continues to be pushed back

## **Salem Claims and Counseling**

**Dave Cooley, Manager**

The office is primarily responsible for providing general reception services for the Department and direct services to veterans, dependents and survivors of Marion and Polk County. The office supports CVSOs daily operations and assists the VSD Administrator and Training Policy Analyst in their training. The office also responds to official inquiries from elected officials on behalf of the Director.

**Interviews**                      640

### **Claims**

New Claims Filed	157
Granted	103
Denied	65
New POAs	106
Appeals	
DRO and BVA filed	14

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BVA Hearings were conducted the week of April 7<sup>th</sup>. Employee Assistance Program and Oregon State Police Security Threat training conducted. Supporting Marion County Veterans Task Force. Conducted training with Military Help Line – Lines for Life

## **Outreach**

### **Joe Glover**

Marion County Veterans Court every Friday.

#### March

3<sup>rd</sup> – ODVA/ODOC Meeting  
5<sup>th</sup> – Governor’s Re-Entry Meeting  
19<sup>th</sup> – Santiam Correctional Visit  
20<sup>th</sup> – OSCI Visit  
25<sup>th</sup> – MCCF Visit

#### April

15<sup>th</sup>- OSP Visit  
16<sup>th</sup>- Santiam Correctional Visit

#### May

8<sup>th</sup> – OSP Visit

14<sup>th</sup> – OSP Visit

**Leah Rickert**

Mar - Attended Oregon Women's Veterans' Conference and staffed a table with the CVSO from Lane County.

May - Oregon Military Family Appreciation Day May 7, 2014:

Homeless Veteran Stand Down on March 25, 2014, held at the Salem First Baptist Church, hosted by Community Action. In depth interaction with Ken and Linda Supportive Services for Veteran Families Program, educating them on ODVA's mission and services and explained the claims process.

Easter Seals training, partnering and referral exchange 05/15/14

Vet Center Training, observed USDVA Public Contact Team Outreach.

**Renee French**

Women Veteran Conference was held March 28 and 29, 2014 in Eugene, OR at the Hilton, approximately 330 female veterans attended. We raised approximately \$4,000 over the weekend to donate back to the next conference.

**Joe Reynoso**

- March 13 – Hiring Heroes at Salem Convention Center
- March 14 – Feed a Vet at Chemeketa Community College
- March 25 – Employment Department Outreach
- April 11 – Employment Department Outreach
- April 22 – Employment Department Outreach
- May 13 - Employment Department Outreach
- May 15 – Armed Forces Day event at the Capitol Mall

**Training, Education Aid and Emergency Assistance**  
**Mitch Sparks, Program Analyst**

**Educational Aid Program**

The Educational Aid Program is suspended until the next fiscal biennium due to budget cuts.

**Emergency Financial Grant Program**

For the April grant cycle there was 63 applications for grants. 23 grants were approved for a total of 40,478 dollars. The average grant was \$1,759.00 dollars. Most grants that were approved were for rent and utility payments to prevent eviction or utility shutoff.

### **Training**

This quarter we have had 2 CVSO's come to Salem for either new training or refresher training on VA Law, appeal writing and strategy. Over the next year we intend to bring in non-accredited and newer VSO's in to attend these intensive classes on VA Law.

### **VSO Certification and Accreditation**

We would like congratulate Mr. Joseph Reynoso in completing his accreditation as a Salem ODVA VSO. Joe comes to ODVA from the Department of Human Services and has brought outstanding knowledge of other state benefits and programs. Joe is also a U.S. Marine Corps veteran.

## **VETERANS' HOME LOAN DIVISION**

**Cody Cox, Manager**

### **Production Review**

For the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2014, the Home Loan Program closed 44 loans for a gross dollar volume of \$8.5. For the same period in 2013, the Home Loan Program funded 28 loans for \$6.03mil. 2014 volume represents an increase of 41% on a unit measurement, and 57% increase on a dollar volume measurement. Loan portfolio runoff has slowed significantly, and even reversing when looking at the new loan servicing portfolio. The total units being serviced at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014 now stands at 1950 loans. The total dollar amount is now \$207.1 million. While the number of units have decreased from YE 2013 (1987 vs. 1950), the total dollar volume under servicing has increased (\$206.8 vs \$207.1). This increase is indicative that more of the older, smaller balance loans paying off or being retired, while the volume of new loans with higher loan amounts are on the increase.

For the month of March 2104, per the most recent revenue and expense statement available for this report date, the Loan Program realized an estimated net income (loss) from operations of \$42K and for the three months ending March 31, 2014 a net income (loss) of (\$626K).

### **Loan Cancellation and Mortgage Insurance Review**

For the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2014, the Loan Cancellation Life Insurance (LCLI) program reported an estimated net gain from operations of \$3K. Through the fiscal time period of July 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014, an estimated net loss of (\$108K) was realized from total LCLI operations. During the reporting period, Standard Insurance Company paid 9 Loan Cancellation Life Insurance claims, representing a gross dollar amount of \$200,914 in paid in full loans. Loan Cancellation Life Insurance extends coverage to over 407 accounts.

As of 03/31/2014, Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI) insures 188 loans at \$40.0M, expressed as 10.67% of units and 19.3% of the gross portfolio dollar balance outstanding.

## **Loan Delinquency Review**

For the reporting period of 03/31/2014 there were 7 State Owned Properties/Real Estate Owned (SOP/REO) in inventory, no change from the prior quarter. There were 9 loans in Foreclosure status, up by 5 loans from the last report date. The number of loans in Bankruptcy remains at 11, with 5 loans reporting delinquent, up by 3 loans from the last report date.

The total of all loans reporting in the 90-day or greater delinquency position was 17, up by 2 loans from the last report date and is expressed as 0.9% unit delinquency on a portfolio of 1,950 loans at 0.9% dollar delinquency on the outstanding dollar portfolio balance of \$207.1M.

ODVA continues to experience reduced delinquency rates as compared to both Conventional and Government Residential Loan Programs. The Mortgage Bankers Association publishes a quarterly National Delinquency Survey and the following represents Oregon specific comparative data from the most recently available First Quarter 2014 report.

The delinquency rate expressed as a percentage of total loans (units) past due for the Federal Veterans Affairs home loan program in Oregon was 3.33%, FHA home loans in Oregon were at 6.08% and Conventional Prime home loans Oregon were at 2.36%. Comparatively, for this reporting period, the total delinquency for loans 30 days and greater for the ODVA home loan program was 2.5% at 49 units. In dollars, the total amount past due is \$3,904,010, which is 1.9% of total servicing dollars.

## **Quarterly Staffing News**

There were no changes in staffing levels or personnel during the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter, 2014.

## **LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS DIVISION**

**Laurie Skillman, Senior Policy Advisor**

### **Action Item 12042013-2**

At the December Meeting of the Advisory Committee, the Legislative Subcommittee was asked to determine whether legislative information met the needs of organizations. In response to this action item and a request to change the communication regarding legislation, ODVA developed a new approach to distributing information on legislation.

At the March 2014 Advisory Committee, the Legislative Subcommittee described a new approach to how the department would communicate legislative activity that impacts veterans. The subcommittee believes this new approach address the issues and concerns that were raised in this action item.

### **Action Item 12042013-4**

At the December Meeting of the Advisory Committee, the Legislative Subcommittee was asked to explore whether the Oregon National Guard and Enlisted Reserve veterans are eligible for the Oregon Preferred Workers Program.

The Preferred Worker Program (PWP) encourages the re-employment of qualified Oregon workers who have permanent disabilities from on-the-job injuries and who are not able to return to their regular employment because of those injuries. The program is funded by worker and employer contributions to the Workers' Benefit Fund (Oregon Workers' Compensation).

The preferred worker program is only available to individuals who were employed by an Oregon Employer who contribute to the Workers' Benefit Fund.

Oregon National Guard and Enlisted Reserve are not employed "by an Oregon employer who contributes to the Workers' Benefit fund." They are employed by the federal government and, therefore, are not eligible for the Oregon Preferred Worker Program.

### **Legislative Overview**

The Legislature met May 28-30 during "Legislative Days." These are not official "Legislative Sessions."

### **Joint Emergency Board Subcommittee on Human Services: May 28, 2014**

- The subcommittee met on May 28<sup>th</sup> and held work sessions on Emergency Board requests.
- Cameron Smith, ODVA Director presented the department's emergency board request for one limited duration training position to provide training for county

veteran service officers. The position would be funded from June 2014 through June 2015. Currently, one person provides all training. Testimony outlined the following:

- Currently, 55 CVSOs are employed by 34 counties
- This is an unusually high number of new, unaccredited CVSOs that need to be trained. The average number of new CVSOs per biennium = six (11%)
- 25% (or 14) of the 55 CVSOs are new hires; 12 of the 14 new CVSOs were hired after July 1, 2013. All 14 CVSOs are unaccredited and in 18-month training program
- ODVA also anticipates four new CVSOs will be added from May to August 2014
- By September 2014, there will be 57 CVSOs (two new county positions) and 33% of all CVSOs will be in initial intensive training program, compared to historical average of 11%

**House Interim Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development: May 28, 2014**

- The committee met on May 28<sup>th</sup> and held a hearing on the following veterans' issue:
  - Update on SB 275, which requires community colleges to develop standards for accepting military service and experience for college credit. Eric Belt, ODVA Veterans Services Administrator, testified on CVSO training in this area.

**House Interim Committee on Veterans Services & Emergency Preparedness: May 29, 2014**

- The committee members include:  
Chair Representative Greg Matthews  
Vice-Chair Representative Shemia Fagan  
Vice-Chair Representative Julie Parrish  
Member Representative Deborah Boone  
Member Representative Sal Esquivel  
Member Representative John Huffman  
Member Representative Brad Witt
- The committee met on May 29<sup>th</sup> and heard updates on the following veterans issues:
  - WWII Memorial
  - Update from the Association of Oregon Counties Veterans Committee and ODVA on activities of the committee. Committee was created in late fall of 2013, meets monthly and addresses veterans' issues.
  - Committee includes 13 county commissioners who are voting members of the committee, ODVA, CVSOs and representatives from Congressional delegation. Testimony from:

- John Lindsey, Linn County Commissioner
- Cameron Smith, ODVA Director
- Joseph Riley, Lane County Veteran Service Officer, testified
- Update of SERVe Project (a study for Employment Retention of Veterans)

### **Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness**

- The committee members include:
  - Chair Senator Brian Boquist
  - Vice-Chair Senator Laurie Monnes Anderson
  - Member Senator Peter Courtney
  - Member Senator Alan Olsen
- The committee members met on May 30<sup>th</sup> and heard updates on the following veterans' issues:
  - WWII Memorial
  - Update from the Association of Oregon Counties Veterans Committee and ODVA on activities of the committee. Committee was created in late Fall 2013, meets monthly and addresses veterans' issues. Committee includes 13 county commissioners who are voting members of the committee, ODVA, CVSOs and representatives from Congressional delegation. Testimony from:
    - Bill Hall, Lincoln County Commissioner
    - Eric Belt, Veterans Services Administrator
    - Heather Miewald, Multnomah County Veteran Service Officer and President of County Veteran Service Officers' Association

### **Administrative Rulemaking**

- The Department has postponed rulemaking activities until late summer 2014.

### **Policies**

- The Department will be starting a long-term project to review all internal policies to ensure that each policy is needed, conforms to all statutory requirements, meets the required statutory standards of readability, and does not conflict with state-wide policies.
- Policy will coordinate with records management on reviews of policies and forms.

## **STATE VETERANS HOMES**

**John Osborn, Manager**

### **The Dalles Veterans' Home**

We are currently waiting for the return of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with USDVA. Again, this grant will provide funding for an electronic medical records system, a new nurse call system, and installation of additional security cameras and access control for various doors across the campus and landscape improvements to the patio area at D wing. Because of the costs associated with landscaping at C wing this portion of the project may not be included with this grant request.

### **Lebanon Veterans' Home**

The weather during the last few months has been mild allowing continued progress on the exterior components at our Lebanon site.

The repetitive work elements at each building have allowed any constructability issues to be worked out early in the process so as to mitigate delays in other buildings. Work on the walkways is moving forward with the foundations poured and installation of structural support elements for the sun rooms. As stated in earlier reports, the identifying of savings early in the construction process now allows us to review previously removed items for inclusion in project. We are reviewing our wish list and will add back those components with the greatest value.

Interior construction continues as we are hanging drywall in Charlie and Community Center. Tape and finish are on their tails and painting follows suit. Millwork and casework are now complete in Alpha and underway in Delta, MEP finishes continue as well throughout both neighborhoods. Lastly I think the paving of the Fire Lane will take place in Mid-June to be followed by paving around the entire site. The exterior site work is continuing around the campus, some of the construction trailers have been moved to accommodate the ongoing landscaping and site concrete work associated with the house plaza, sidewalks and public spaces. The solarium footings and slabs have been poured and the structural steel components have been erected. In addition the glulam columns and beams have been installed and the installation of the roof structures has started.

The overall budget for the project is still on track and the schedule continues to trend for an end of August completion. Early in the project a number of elements were removed due to budget consideration and placed on an "Add Back" list. The project team is currently review this add back list to determine which elements might provide the best value to the project. We are also working with the operator VCCO/Westcare on the operational needs to ensure we have a seamless transition once we begin operation of the facility.

## **OREGON VETERANS' HOMES**

### **Dallas Swafford, Admission and Liaison Officer**

It has been a great past few months here at the Oregon Veterans' Home (OVH) in The Dalles since the last VAAC meeting in Eugene. Most recently, OVH had the privilege of hosting the dedication ceremony for The Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway on Memorial Day. There were several distinguished guest in attendance, including Senators, State Representatives, the Mayor of the Dalles and of course, many residents of OVH and Vietnam Veterans from across the state. Anyone who was in attendance would surely agree the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway dedication ceremony was a great way to not only honor all veterans on Memorial Day, but also a really great opportunity to pay a long overdue tribute all Vietnam Veterans by dedicating I-84 in their honor. It was a historic moment for all involved. The crowd estimates ranged between 225 and 400 people in attendance.

With the new Veterans' Home in Lebanon due to open soon, it is a very exciting thing to see Oregon open another long term care facility to better serve our aging veterans in the state. With that being said, there some things we must take into consideration as the opening of OVH in Lebanon comes to fruition. One those things we must take into consideration is the fact that many of the residents who admit to OVH The Dalles initially admit to the facility from somewhere near the Interstate 5 corridor.

With that in mind, it stands to reason that the OVH Lebanon could, and will, have an adverse effect on the census at OVH The Dalles. Rather than accept the idea we are going to live with a lower census at OVH The Dalles, we are looking at it as an opportunity to aggressively embark on a public awareness campaign and remind veterans across the State of Oregon and parts of Washington we are here and offer the best long term care possible to veterans in need of nursing home care throughout the region.

I have begun to makes trips to different areas in the Northeast regions of Oregon and the Southeast regions of Washington to speak with hospital discharge planners to inform them of the options provided to veterans in need of long term care and the benefits available to veterans who live at OVH to meet their long term care requirements. I have also made a point to try to meet with fraternal veteran's organizations such as VFW and American Legion posts in the areas I have visited.

I have quite a journey still ahead of me to continue to spread the word about the services OVH can provide to veterans, their spouses and Gold Star parents. The first order of business as I continue this mission is to meet with hospital discharge planners and various other groups along the entire stretch of the Interstate 84 corridor. From there, we will collectively determine what our next and most efficient course of action will be to continue promote the benefits available to our veteran population as well as their spouses and Gold Star Parents.

Before I end this report, I'd like to also mention that our long anticipated Gold Award visit will occur July 22 through July 24<sup>th</sup>. By the time we all gather in the next VAAC meeting I hope I can proudly say that the ODVA/VCCO partnership helped OVH The Dalles become the first Veterans Home in The United States to achieve the honor of being awarded the Gold Award. As always, this is most important because receiving the award would serve a reflection of the quality of care the veterans, their spouses and Gold Star Parents receive, rather than an accolade bestowed up our respective agencies.

## COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SERVICES

**Nicole Hoeft, Manager**

### **Public Information**

Outreach, awareness and communication of veteran benefit information is the crux of the Public Information section. As the agency begins to implement the newly developed strategic framework, the section is beginning to plan strategies that support key objectives and goals.

Looking forward, Public Information will begin to amplify awareness of resources and build the Oregon veteran brand. This goal, simply put, is to Drive Veteran Engagement. Some key objectives in the next five years will be to:

#### **1. Deepen the connection with the veteran community**

- Boots on the ground drive community engagement. This activity has been the center of ODVA's method of reaching veterans. We will enhance focus on coordinating our activities with that of the veteran community to provide appropriate people, resources and information at events throughout Oregon.

#### **2. Promote a positive image of veterans and their families**

- Often when civilians read or watch stories about veterans in the media, they learn of the challenges that are a result of military service. However, veterans also have valuable and marketable traits that were learned and tested through their military service. ODVA will begin to actively promote the positive aspects of being a veteran; traits like leadership, honesty, stellar work ethic, problem solving, and duty and how these characteristics add to the overall well-being of our Oregon communities.

#### **3. Build the Oregon veteran brand**

- The concept extends beyond a logo, pretty pictures and online information. Our goal is to tell the story of our everyday Oregon veterans while educating the about the benefits and resources available through our work.

#### 4. Ensure a seamless and positive experience by veterans

- This is the grassroots and word-of-mouth approach to awareness. If the veteran community has a good experience at ODVA and through Oregon’s network of veteran service offices, our veterans (“customer”) will become an advocate for veteran benefits and resources in Oregon.

#### Online

2013 TYD and current 2014 Q1 and Q2 impact our online and print methods:

Method	2013 TYD	2014 TYD
Website	463,087 Total Page Views 245,880 Total Unique Visitors	177,438 YTD Page Views <u>79,3000 YTD Unique Visitors</u> 101,143 Q2 Total Page Views <u>45,934 Q2 Total Unique Visitors</u> 111,366 Q1 Total Page Views 47,746 Q1 Total Unique Visitors
Blog	394,470 Total Page Views 29,426 Total Unique Visitors	326,755 YTD Page Views <u>18,109 YTD Unique Visitors</u> 227,363 Q2 Page Views <u>12,044 Q2 Unique Visitors</u> 41,077 Q1 Page Views 3,078 Q1 Unique Visitors
Facebook	1,449 Total Likes	1,703 Total Likes
eSubscribe	12,108 Total Subscribers 24,981 Total Subscriptions	<u>12,117 Total Subscribers</u> <u>30,271 Q2 (Total) Subscriptions</u> 27,811 Q1 Subscriptions
Twitter	N/A	43 Followers
YouTube	N/A	949 Views
Veteran Benefit Magazine (Print)	125,000	45,000
ePublish	N/A	<u>2,562 Q2 Impressions</u> 2,632 Q1 Impressions
Vets News (Print)	80,500 Issues	<u>21,500 May Edition</u> 21,000 February Edition
Vets News (eNewsletter)	1,024 Subscribers	1,268 Subscribers

CVSO websites	38,819 Total Visits 15,120 Unique Visitors	41,943 Total Visits <u>10,144 Total Unique Visitors</u> 34,277 Q2 Visits <u>7,461 Q2 Unique Visitors</u> 7,666 Q1 Visits 2,683 Q1 Unique Visitors
Home Loan site	50,381 Total Page Views 6,296 Unique Visitors	54,676 Total Page Views <u>9,603 Unique Visitors</u> 34,160 Q2 Total Page Views <u>5,850 Q2 Unique Visitors</u> 30,197 Q1 Total Page Views 5,409 Q1 Unique Visitors

### PI Projects

**DMV Data** - Public Information has received 4 months of veteran data from DMV, equating to nearly 9,000 Veteran Benefit magazines being sent to veterans in Oregon. Legislation passed in 2013 directed DMV to ask veterans if they wanted to receive information from ODVA.

**Donation Page** – Another piece of legislation that passed in 2013 was SB 762 which created a Suicide Prevention and Awareness program funded through charitable check of monies and online donations. A link to donate to this fund is offered to all Oregon citizens who renew and complete new registration transactions on DMV’s website. To facilitate the online transactions, ODVA completed work with the state web vendor and treasury to build a web page. As of April 28, 2014 users are now able to donate to not only the Suicide Prevention and Awareness, but the Oregon Veterans Homes, Women Veterans and an Oregon Veterans Support Fund. The agency will implement a donation campaign in June 2014.

### Information Services

**Peter Trnavaskis, Manager**

The last several months has seen the completion of a long term strategic plan that focuses on critical IT infrastructure upgrades over the next 6 years for the Agency. These infrastructure upgrades will enable ODVA to move away from 25 year old IBM mainframe technology to a more sustainable computing model.

This new model will allow individual departments to share data which will ensure less redundant questions to veterans contacting the Agency and the ability to implement a more proactive model for outreach.

Currently we are in the midst of updating the buildings 30 year old wiring to a more up to date model that prepares the Agency to move to VOIP and ensures we are able to effectively communicate both internally and externally.

In addition to the wiring project we are working hand in hand with the Oregon Veterans Home-Lebanon project team in order to turn up the new facility. We have received nearly all of the quotes and have an implementation plan in place to ensure the facility is ready to receive residents in the October timeframe.

Lastly, we are preparing to release a Request for Proposal that will replace our custom built, but outdated Conservatorship system. This change will modernize the entire conservatorship department and ensure protected persons are well taken care of. The new system will allow ODVA to move away from the IBM mainframe technology and implement a long term and supportable application.