

## **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

**Cameron Smith**

Every quarter seems to go faster than the last. These updates, though, make us pause and capture our department's impact for veterans and their families.

In September, it was our honor to present the Advisory Committee's annual report to the Governor and the Legislature. The report captured our strong efforts to date as a team as well as where we have opportunity to improve.

Similarly, the Secretary of State's (SoS) Audit Team independently reviewed our veteran services work over the last 6 months and published a report in September. The review highlighted our strategic framework and additional considerations for our work going forward. We jointly presented on the SoS review and our strategic framework to House and Senate Veterans' committees and it was very well received.

The SoS review and our own team's strategic planning have infused our budget proposals and legislative concepts. State revenue, especially for the General Fund, is often limited given the challenge to cover major program areas like education, health and human services, and public safety. As a small agency with a big mission, though, we feel well positioned to make a strong case to the Governor and Legislature for investments in our efforts.

We are proposing a number of tailored policy option packages for the 2015-17 biennium that are aligned with our strategic framework that we will discuss at our December meeting. At the same time, we are already implementing targeted course corrections out of existing resources.

In October, Mitch, and our new addition of Gus Bedwell, organized our best training conference ever for Veteran Service Officers. Training is a key role for our Statewide Veteran Services and it is exciting to see Mitch, Gus and the cross team take our work to the next level for the conference and VSO training throughout the year.

This fall, ODVA also hosted the first ever Veteran Owned Business Opportunity Showcase (VOBOS) at Camp Withycombe. Marc Huchette was the lead driver from our team to develop an excellent day-long seminar to help veteran business owners access support services and public contracting opportunities when starting, sustaining and growing their businesses.

I also would be remiss if I did not highlight the dedication of the Allworth Veterans' Home in Lebanon. This has been a project 6 years in the making and it was a fantastic ceremony. The team made it happen, including many local and public/private sector partners, but great credit goes to John Osborn for being our ringmaster and ensuring the completion of this amazing skilled nursing facility for our veterans and their families. We also now have our first residents living in the facility!

There were countless events around the state for Veterans' Day and we hosted a ceremony at ODVA headquarters at the Afghan/Iraqi Freedom memorial. This was the first time since the dedication of the memorial that we did not add any new names to the wall. With the name reading of the fallen, though, we are reminded that we are still a country at war with thousands deployed overseas.

On a personal note, my wife and I also welcomed a baby boy, Romy Nimitz Smith (pronounced Romy), during October's lunar eclipse. Not sure what the astrologers would say, but I'm taking the timing as a good omen. Frankie, Romy's 2 ½ year old big sister, loves him and seems to be adjusting well to the newbie in the house.

What I appreciated during my paternity leave was the fact that we have an incredible team in place. We are all important individually, but ultimately, any success we have as a department is because of the team that can step up in any of our absences and ensure we never miss a beat in our efforts for veterans and their families.

Thank you as Advisory Committee members for being an important part of our team and for your continued commitment in serving our fellow veterans. Please dig into the details that follow section by section and we look forward to a great year in 2015.

## **FINANCIAL SERVICES DIVISION**

**Bruce Shriver, Chief Financial Officer**

### **Annual Cash Flow Projections of the Department's Veterans Loan Program**

FSD staff along with Caine Mitter (the Department's outside Financial Advisor), are continuing to work on the 2014 Cash Flow Analysis of the Department's Veterans Loan Program (VLP). This analysis entails projecting multiple year cash flows of the VLP under a variety of assumptions and scenarios which could impact the Program's future financial performance. Key assumptions relating to loan originations, interest rates, prepayment speeds, levels of loan losses and operational costs are incorporated into different scenarios to assess the magnitude of the cash flow impact of these assumptions on the projected future performance of the VLP. These cash flow projections and analyzes are expected to be completed by the end of January 2015.

### **Potential Bond Sale by End of 2014**

The Department is currently working on a potential bond sale that would be completed in December 2014. The purpose of this bond sale would be to raise additional lendable funds from the issuance of Qualified Veteran Mortgage Bonds for the Veterans' Loan Program and also to refund some existing, outstanding variable rate debt and replace it with fixed rate debt. If this bond sale is completed as planned, additional information relating to the bond sale will be provided in the next quarterly report to the Advisory Committee.

### **2015-17 Department Budget Development**

As previously reported, the Department submitted its Agency Request Budget (ARB) for the 2015-17 biennium to the Department of Administrative Services, Chief Financial Office on August 1, 2014. The 2015-17 ARB consists of funding requests covering core program areas of the Department as well as a number of policy option packages for the Governor's consideration to augment existing program efforts, outreach and potential new initiatives. It is our hope that most or all of the Department's budgetary requests will be incorporated into the Governor's Recommended 2015-17 Budget that will be released on or about December 1, 2014. Additional information on the Department's ARB can be found at the following link: <http://www.oregon.gov/odva/INFO/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>

### **Audited Fiscal Year Financial Reports**

For fiscal year 2014, there were two audited annual financial reports issued for the Department, rather than one single report. The Veterans' Loan Program audit was conducted by the Oregon Secretary of State's Office and the Veterans' Home Program audit was conducted by the certified public accounting firm of Merina & Company, LLP. A summary of the financial results from these reports can be found in the following paragraphs. Copies of both audited annual financial reports may be obtained at the following link: <http://www.oregon.gov/odva/INFO/Pages/AnnualReports.aspx>

The June 30, 2014 audited financial statements show a fiscal year change in Net Position in the Veterans' Loan Program of approximately (\$2.4) million. This figure includes year-end adjustments such as updated arbitrage rebate calculations and securities lending transactions, as well as the cumulative effect of a change in accounting principle. The same period for the prior fiscal year showed a change in Net Position of approximately (\$2.6) million.

The Veterans' Home Program showed a combined change in Net Position of approximately \$26.4 million for the fiscal year, compared to a combined change in Net Position of approximately \$1.4 million for the same period of the prior fiscal year. The increase in Net Position in the Veterans' Home Program in both fiscal year 2014 and 2013 is primarily the result of positive operating results, contributions received from the Oregon Veterans' Home Trust Fund and the receipt of federal and state grant related monies to help construct the Lebanon Veterans' Home.

Net Position (Assets) under management for the Conservatorship Program's Private-Purpose Trust Fund were approximately \$25.0 million as of June 30, 2014. Net Position (Assets) under management was approximately \$24.0 million as of June 30, 2013.

Monies held in the Veterans' Home Trust Fund were approximately \$1.4 million as of June 30, 2014. Monies held in this same fund as of June 30, 2013 were approximately \$1.1 million.

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

In October 2014, the LVH began accepting residents into the newly opened nursing facility. The number of resident admissions will initially be limited until the LVH receives its Medicare/Medicaid certifications, as well as receiving United States Department of Veterans' Affairs recognition. It is hoped the certifications and official recognition can be obtained by the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter of 2015. It is anticipated that the LVH will initially incur financial losses during the first couple of years of its operations while the resident census is gradually increasing towards the design capacity of this facility.

### **Cashiers**

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

Jul 2014	\$5,698,896	Daily Business Day Average	\$259,041
Aug 2014	\$3,876,823	Daily Business Day Average	\$125,059
Sep 2014	\$4,136,089	Daily Business Day Average	\$133,422

## VETERANS SERVICES DIVISION

**Eric Belt, Administrator**

The Veterans' Services Division is comprised of five programs: Conservatorship; Statewide Veterans' Services (Salem and Portland); Training Certification & Outreach; Emergency Financial Assistance, and Educational Aid. All programs directly relate to the agency mission and affect Oregon's 322,000 veterans.

### PROGRAMS

#### **Conservatorship – Kelly Breshears, Manager**

**Mission:** The central role of the conservatorship program is to manage the financial affairs of disabled veterans, their dependents, and survivors who are unable to manage their finances.

#### Interviews/Motions:

56	Field Interviews conducted
16	VA inquiries responses
6	Incoming court inquiries/motions filed by ODVA

#### Current Status:

139	Protected persons currently under conservatorship
1	New conservator case gained this quarter
4	New conservator cases, pending court approval
8	Representative cases
7	Representative cases pending appointment

#### Major Events:

- Conservatorship Manager was confirmed by the senate to the Governor's Residential Facilities Advisory Committee in September. This committee oversees the Office of the Long Term Care Ombudsman and earlier this year began overseeing the new State Office of the Public Guardian.
- The conservatorship team welcomed new employee Rosemary (Rose) Rowe in October. Rose has a background working for the ARC of Oregon in the Special Needs Trust division and brings great skills to the team. Rose will be working as a Trust Officer Assistant.
- Conservatorship staff attended a quarterly Guardianship Conservatorship Association of Oregon member meeting on September 19<sup>th</sup>.
- The Conservatorship Manager attended Core Mediation training, presented by DOJ, in September and the Annual CVSO Conference in October.

### **Statewide Veterans' Services, Portland Office—Martin Ornelas, Manager**

Mission - 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 Affairs Portland Regional Office.

#### Outcomes:

1,779	New Powers of Attorney given to ODVA
107	Veterans assisted
26	Claims filed directly by PDX service officers
1,263	Claims filed by County Veteran Service Officers, and reviewed by PDX
87	Decision Review Officer Hearings
69	Board of Veterans Appeals Hearings
\$15,591,261	Retroactive benefits awarded

#### Appeals

2	New appeals filed
3	Previously filed appeals granted
0	Previously filed appeals denied

#### Outreach/Community Service

2	Events attended
230	Approximate total veterans / family members in attendance

### **Statewide Veterans' Services, Salem Office—Joe Glover, Manager**

Mission – Providing general reception service for the Department and direct service to veterans, dependents and survivors for Marion and Polk Counties. The office supports County Veteran Service Office daily operations as well as assisting the Veteran Services Division Administrator and Training Policy Analysts. The office also responds to official inquiries from elected officials on behalf of the director.

#### Outcomes:

525	Interviews conducted with veterans
168	New Powers of Attorney given to ODVA
194	New claims filed by ODVA service officers
166	Claims granted
91	Claims denied
23	Notices of Disagreement filed

#### Appeals

12	New appeals filed
5	Previously filed appeals granted
0	Previously filed appeals denied

#### Outreach/Community Service

6	Events attended
12	Marion County Veterans Court appearances
1	Board of Veterans Appeals hearings

## **Training Certification and Outreach—Mitch Sparks and Gus Bedwell, Program Analysts**

Our annual Veteran Service Officer (VSO) Training Conference was held October 21<sup>st</sup> through the 24<sup>th</sup> in Portland. This marked the first time the Department combined what were previously two annual conferences into one. Some conference highlights:

- The Director and Geoff Guilfoxy led a working group to garner inputs for the agency's Strategic Plan. As part of this working group we invited our community partners from the Employment Department, Chemeketa Community College, National Association of Black Veterans, Veterans of Vietnam Veterans, Veterans of Foreign Wars, and ODVA Administrative Staff.
- For training, two attorney instructors from the National Veterans Legal Services Program were invited to provide 20 hours of training. This training was split into two training tracks, one for intermediate and advanced VSOs and one track for beginner VSOs. The training they provided was very concise and practical for the Veteran Service Officer community. Topics included Camp Lejeune contaminated water updates, legal research, analogous ratings, and current precedent setting court cases.
- Attendance was at an all-time high, with 98 attendees on the first day and 78 for the remainder of the conference.

### **Accreditation**

This quarter three County Veteran Service Officers came to Salem for either new or refresher training on VA Law, appeal writing, and strategy. Additionally, the following Veteran Service Officers took and passed their accreditation test in November; Vicki Horn from Washington County, Carrie Lucas from Deschutes County, Patrick Wilbern from Wasco County, and Eric Workley from Jackson County.

### **Emergency Financial Assistance**

For October through December 2014 - 2nd Quarter 2014-15, 78 applications for grants were received, with 26 of those were approved for a total of \$ 48,400. The average grant was \$1,860. Most approved grants were for mortgage/rent and utility payments.

### **Educational Aid**

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

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## **VETERANS' HOME LOAN PROGRAM**

**Cody Cox, Manager**

### **Production Review**

For the 3rd Quarter, 2014, the Home Loan Program closed 73 loans for a gross dollar volume of \$18,250,421. For the same period in 2013, the Home Loan Program funded 83 loans for \$16,704,018. 2014 3rd Quarter volume represents a decrease of 12% on a unit measurement, and 109.5% increase on a dollar volume measurement. I should note that September 2013 marks the single highest monthly closing volume since 2008. Year to date production totals through September 2014 are at 200 Units at \$44,771,780. By annualizing the production through the first 3 quarters of the year, total 2014 production should fall at or above 265 units for close to \$60 million. Should that hold through year end, that would represent the highest closing levels for the ORVET Home Loan program since 2007, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest levels since 1997. Year-end numbers for 2013 were at 199 units for \$40,884,266.

Loan portfolio runoff always remains a concern, but current trends suggest we are seeing a reversal. The total units being serviced at the end of 3rd Quarter 2014 now stands at 1939 loans. The total dollar amount is now \$223.2 mil, up from \$217.8 million at the end of Q2.

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

Current information on LCLI was not available at the time of this report.

As of 09/30/2014, Private Mortgage Insurance (PMI) insures 195 loans at \$42.1M, expressed as 10.06% of units and 18.86% of the gross portfolio dollar balance outstanding.

### **Loan Delinquency Review**

For the reporting period of 09/30/2014 there were 3 State Owned Properties/Real Estate Owned (SOP/REO) in inventory, down 2 from the prior quarter. Of these 3 properties, 1 is pending sale on a lease with option to purchase providing an income stream to the Agency, and the remaining 2 are listed for sale and showing interest.

There were 7 loans in a Foreclosure status, up by 2 loans from the last report date. The number of loans in Bankruptcy remains at 13. The total of all loans reporting in the 90-day or greater delinquency position was 12, down by 9 loans from the last report date and is expressed as 0.06% unit delinquency on a portfolio of 1,939 loans and at 0.04% dollar delinquency on the outstanding dollar portfolio balance of \$223.2M. 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 Third 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 3.95%, FHA home loans in Oregon were at 6.41% and Conventional Prime home loans Oregon were at 2.39%. Comparatively, for this reporting period, the total delinquency for loans 30 days and greater for the ODVA home loan program was 2.4%

at 46 units, up minimally from the previous report. In dollars, the total amount past due is \$2,654,415, which is 1.2% of total servicing dollars, down from the previous report.

### **Quarterly Staffing News**

There were no changes in staffing levels or personnel during the 3rd Quarter, 2014.

# **LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS DIVISION**

**Laurie Skillman, Senior Policy Advisor**

## **Legislative Overview**

The Legislature met September 15-17 during “Legislative Days.” These are not official “Legislative Sessions.”

## **House Interim Committee on Veterans Services & Emergency Preparedness**

- 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 September 16, 2014 and Cameron Smith provided updates on the following:
  - VAAC Report to the Governor
  - ODVA Strategic framework
  - Secretary of State Review of ODVA
  - Update on Lines for Life and SB 762 suicide prevention and awareness campaign
  - Update on Veterans' Homes

## **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 met on September 17, 2014 and Cameron Smith provided updates on the following:
  - VAAC Report to the Governor
  - ODVA Strategic framework
  - Secretary of State Review of ODVA
  - Update on Lines for Life and SB 762 suicide prevention and awareness campaign

- Update on Veterans' Homes
- The committee also heard an update from stakeholders on the veterans' preference in employment. The stakeholders will return in December for an update and for legislative concepts.

## **Legislative Concepts**

ODVA has proposed four legislative concepts that will move forward pending final approval by the Governor's office.

### **Legislative Concept #504**

#### Summary and Description of the Problem

The purpose of this concept is to make technical and housekeeping amendments and to repeal outdated statutes relating to veterans in ORS chapters 406, 407 and 408. The changes include making technical and housekeeping amendments for clarity and consistency and repealing statutes that are obsolete.

#### Proposed Solutions

The solutions are to repeal statutes that are outdated, obsolete, or that are no longer applicable, and to make technical and housekeeping amendments for clarity, consistency and readability. ODVA implements, interprets and enforces these statutes. Repealing certain statutes will eliminate unnecessary administrative rules and make veteran's statutes easier for the public to understand and use.

### **Legislative Concept #505**

#### Summary and Description of the Problem

ODVA acts as a conservator, under a court order, for veterans who are protected persons and who are unable to manage their finances. Under the conservatorship program ODVA also acts as a representative payee (also known as a "fiduciary") for veterans. A representative payee is the designated agent to receive a financial benefit on behalf of a person who has been determined to be incapable of managing these benefits. ODVA acts in this capacity as an agent for veterans for US Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) benefits and for US Social Security Administration (SSA) benefits. The USDVA or the SSA makes the determination that the veteran is incapable of managing the benefit (as opposed to a court for a conservatorship) and appoints ODVA as the designated agent for a veteran for these financial benefits. In addition, these federal agencies also specify how these benefits must be managed and spent.

The current broad statutory authority for ODVA to act in this capacity is not as clear or specific as it could be. ODVA wants and needs clear and specific authority in order to effectively act in this role as an agent on behalf of certain client veterans.

#### Proposed Solution

The solution to the problem is to provide ODVA with specific statutory power and authority to serve as a fiduciary for veterans for veteran's benefits (appointed by the USDVA) and to serve as a representative payee for veterans for social security and supplemental security income benefits (appointed by the US Social Security Administration).

## **Legislative Concept #509**

### Summary and Description of the Problem

The ODVA home loan program provides Oregon veterans with below market-rate home loans. The Foreclosure Avoidance Mediation Program (ORS 86.726) requires lenders to meet with residential loan borrowers and a mediator prior to the foreclosure process. Due to the compliance costs, the law exempts mortgage lenders who commence fewer than 175 foreclosures in a calendar year.

In May 2014, the Department of Justice concluded that the State and all its agencies are one “lender” for the purposes ORS 86.726. Effectively, no state agency gets to use the exemption. Therefore, ODVA cannot separately qualify for the exemption, even though during the six-year period 2008-2013 ODVA only foreclosed on 48 loans and took a deed in lieu of foreclosure on 13 loans.

ODVA is required to meet or exceed the policy purposes of the mediation program. ORS 407.095 states: “It is the policy of the State of Oregon to make every reasonable attempt to keep a veteran in the home purchased under the loan program when the veteran is unable to make required loan payments.”

ODVA is a unique lender and already has the tools need to work with veterans to avoid foreclosure because ODVA is a loan originator and services all its loans. These factors, and the policy requiring ODVA to work with veterans to stay in their homes, positions ODVA to provide creative and flexible solutions for veterans. Compliance with the mediation foreclosure program is a time-consuming and unnecessary expense to ODVA that has statutory policies and procedures in place that provide far greater protections to veterans.

### Proposed Solution

Exempt ODVA from the provisions of ORS 87.726 that requires ODVA to enter into mediation and negotiate a foreclosure avoidance agreement with a veteran borrower. This exemption would allow ODVA to meet its existing statutory requirement to work with the veteran to keep the veteran in the home they purchased, and not be unnecessarily burdened with a lesser, but duplicative requirement.

## **Legislative Concept #510**

### Summary and Description of the Problem

Currently, veteran’s names and addresses maintained by ODVA are not protected from disclosure under the Oregon public records laws.

Background. Since 2009, the Legislature has shown a strong public policy to provide veterans’ names and contact information to ODVA by enacting five major bills. The purpose of these bills is for ODVA to contact veterans and help them access and utilize state and federal benefits they have earned. ODVA works directly with veterans to provide home loans to veterans, files for federal veteran benefits, acts as a conservator or representative payee, provides care through the Oregon Veteran Homes, and provides education and emergency aid. In addition, all counties file federal benefit claims through ODVA and the Department maintains all data files on these veteran claims. Certain limited information on veterans in these files, such as loan application information, HIPAA information, information derived from DMV data bases, and military discharge records (DD-214) are protected. However, a veteran’s personal contact information is not.

The fact that an individual is a veteran is considered very personal information to a veteran. In part, this is because historically, some veterans have been treated badly and suffered discrimination, particularly Vietnam veterans. Also, a veteran's military training and focus on self-reliance makes it difficult for a veteran to ask for help, even if that help is getting the benefits they have earned. It is important that a veteran have the comfort and the confidence knowing their personal information is protected if they contact ODVA to ask for help for benefits, for emergency aid, for conservatorship matters, for borrowing money for a home or accessing long-term care, and that this information is not available to the public. A public policy of gathering and maintaining veteran's personal information, and encouraging veterans to provide personal information and seek help from ODVA becomes very challenging to implement if a veteran knows that their personal information is available to anyone.

Veterans are a popular target for scams, con artists and pension poachers who cloak themselves in a patriotic-looking non-profit status and prey on veterans and their families. Without an exemption from disclosure of veterans' personal information, ODVA is required to release this information to individuals who may use this information maliciously.

Some veterans fear that if they contact ODVA, their future employment opportunities may be compromised because a potential employer may believe that the veteran is filing a claim for a benefit and not want to hire someone who needs assistance. Although this fear may be unfounded, it remains a perception of some veterans.

#### Proposed Solution

In order to protect personal information about veterans and service members obtained by the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs, this information must be an exemption to the disclosure requirements under the Oregon Public Records Laws (ORS Chapter 192).

#### **Collaborative Project with ODVA: Policy and Process on Memorials on ODVA Grounds**

A work group will be established with the members of the Advisory Subcommittee on Legislation, Administrative Rules and Agency Policy (Dennis Guthrie and Kevin Owens) and ODVA (Laurie Skillman, Ed VanDyke and John Osborn) develop a final policy and process on requests to place memorials on ODVA grounds. When the document is completed, it will be presented to VAAC for review for the purposes of advising the Director on this matter.

Until the group has completed its work and a process is in place, it is recommended that the VAAC not consider presentations and proposals.

The following is the plan for the work group:

1. Inventory current memorials on the property.
2. Determine any statutory or rule requirements or prohibitions on the placement of memorials on the grounds of ODVA. (Example: Department of Administrative Services)
3. Devise a process for parties to submit proposals for memorials to ODVA.
4. Determine who should be on an evaluation committee that would make a recommendation to the Director.

5. Devise a criteria to be used to evaluating proposals, including, but not limited to the following:
  - Consideration of whether there are similar memorials on ODVA grounds
  - Consideration of whether there are similar memorials at nearby locations or in the state
  - Consideration of the veteran or the nature of the conflict that is being honored
  - Consideration of the size and potential location of the memorial
  - Consideration of all other memorials on the property so that their stature is not diminished
  - Consideration of the artistic quality, size and materials that are in keeping with the quality and nature and compatibility with existing memorials on the grounds
  - Consideration of the costs of maintenance and who will pay for maintenance
  - Consideration of the length of construction
  - Consideration of when all funds will be secured
6. Prepare and present a draft proposal for the process and criteria for evaluating and considering requests to place memorials on the grounds of ODVA.
7. Present the proposal to VAAC.

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## **STATE VETERANS HOMES**

**John Osborn, Manager**

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

The RFP for a new nurse call system, installation of additional security cameras and access control for various doors across the campus was released on November 5<sup>th</sup> and closed on November 26<sup>th</sup>. Proposals have been received and our evaluation committee are currently reviewing the proposals and should make a final selection by mid-December. After a contract is in place with the successful proposer we plan to start work immediately.

In addition, an ITB for landscape improvements to the patio area at C and D wings was released on October 29<sup>th</sup> and closed on November 13<sup>th</sup>. DOJ is currently reviewing the construction contract with final execution anticipated by mid-December. Work will likely start 30 to 45 days after contract execution.

As adequate storage continues to be a periodic problem we are pursuing the purchase of an additional storage container to help manage the problem. We should have one on site in the next 4 to 5 weeks.

### **Lebanon Veterans' Home**

The Lebanon home is complete. At this writing we have 4 residents in Charlie 1. Westcare Management anticipates a slow ramp up as staffing and facility operations allow.

The campus phone system has been experiencing some problem with final implementation. The phone provider has worked out most all the problem but there are still some challenges to overcome. However, we are expecting a fully operational phone system across the campus by the end of November. As with any large complex project there are always a number of start-up problems to work through. The project team is addressing the issues as they are identified with the goal of resolving them as quickly as possible.

We are still under budget for the project which has provided us with the opportunity to add back certain elements previously removed. The construction team is continuing to review the "Add Back List" to determine which elements might provide the best value to the project. The item of greatest importance was the enclosed walkways the addition of this element provides the connective unity to all the buildings across the campus. The grant will remain open until next summer allowing us the ability to purchase equipment and other items needed during the time the home is receiving new residents and moving towards full occupancy.

The operator, VCCO/ Westcare, has administrative staffs that are now beginning the process of interviewing and hiring those staff member who will provide daily care to the residents. They are also in the process of negotiating with local companies who will provide various services to the veterans' home.

## **Oregon Veterans' Home, The Dalles**

### **Dallas Swafford, Program Director**

#### **Gold Award**

As I'm sure you are all well aware by now, Oregon Veterans' Home, The Dalles, is the proud recipient of the American Health Care Association's 2014 Gold Award. I want to once again say congratulations to all the staff at OVH, the Westcare Management team and the VCCO Board for working so diligently at putting the systems in place to provide such high quality care to the veterans and their spouses here at OVH to be deemed worthy of receiving such an honor. To be the first state veterans' home in the United States to receive the honor is a testament to the triangle of leadership put forth by ODVA, Westcare and VCCO. In early October I had the honor of traveling to Washington DC to witness Cheryl Maitland, OVH, The Dalles, Administrator, accept the award on behalf of the entire team at the American Health Care Association National Conference. To see Oregon represented as the first state veterans' home to accept the award seemed very fitting as our goal is to lead the way in long term care for veterans and continue to have an innovative approach at providing the highest quality care to our beloved veterans and their spouses who call OVH home.

#### **Multi-Sensory Room**

I'm very excited to announce that we have a multi-sensory therapy room up and running in Delta wing here at OVH, The Dalles. The concept of the multi-sensory room is that it helps to stimulate all the human senses, (sight, smell, sound, audio and touch) which many studies have shown have had a very positive results when administered to dementia patients under the right conditions. In the room there is a projector that projects soothing scenes accompanied with relaxing sounds, aroma therapy and a multitude of comforting objects to touch. We also have the option project scenes and play music that the patients may be able to relate to a certain time in their past, which for dementia patients, is said to stimulate neurons in the brain that have the ability to recall memories from that given time period and actually help them remember people and events from a certain time in their lives. This is said to be especially helpful when family members spend time with their loved ones in the multi-sensory rooms. The reports we are getting from staff and family members of Delta wing residents who are using the multi-sensory room have been extremely positive.

There are reports that the room has helped significantly reduce aggressive behaviors among some of the aggressive residents in the memory care unit and even reports in the reduction of psychotropic medicines in some of those residents. We are currently in the process of doing an extensive data collection over an extended period of time to track how the multi-sensory room impacts the residents who use it, whether or not using the room results in a reduction of psychotropic medicines for residents who administered psychotropic medicines, decline in aggressive behaviors and the positive impact it has family members who spend time in the room with their loved ones. I hope to be able to present and share with you some of the data we are collecting by the time of the next VAAC meeting.

## **Veterans Day**

Despite being extremely cold and windy on Veterans Day here in The Dalles we had a wonderful celebration for our veterans and spouses here at OVH, The Dalles, and in the community as a whole. Many of the veterans living at OVH rode in our bus in the Veterans Day Parade. Luckily for us we had the luxury of being inside a heated bus and did not have to endure the cold temperature and 40 mile per hour wind gusts. I was fortunate enough to be on the bus with our veterans and the outpouring of support from the local residents who attended the parade was really amazing and it was very obvious the veterans who participated were very appreciative of the gratitude shown to them by the local community. Following the parade, the local VFW hosted a potluck here at OVH and the turnout from the community was quite large. Following the potluck there was live music played and members of the local community interacted with the resident veterans and spouses of OVH in a show of appreciation and support. It was a very successful Veterans Day and showed how much the community is willing to show support to veterans despite less than desirable weather conditions that would keep people indoors under most conditions.

## **EDWARD C. ALLWORTH OREGON VETERANS' HOME, LEBANON**

**Jeremy Woodall, Program Director**

### **Now Open!**

We are proud to announce that the Lebanon Oregon Veterans' Home is now open. We accepted our first resident – Mr. Donald Tubbs (WWII Marine) – on October 23.

We are currently going through our CMS certification which will be followed by our Dementia licensure, and then we will apply for USDVA recognition. We anticipate being fully certified and recognized early 2015.

### **Overview**

As with any new project such as this there seems to be an unlimited amount of things to learn and understand. This includes not only a new building, but new processes, new systems, and new people. It has been a wonderful experience so far mostly untouched by major problems. Of those the phone system seems to be the most troublesome, but we have a solid plan to overcome that.

### **Census**

The resident census at the Oregon Veterans' Home in Lebanon had no average for September as we were not yet open. We averaged two (2) veterans in October and we anticipate an average of four (4) veterans for November. We are currently at a little over 2% occupancy.

### **Of Note**

**Volunteers:** Megan Eddy, OVH Recreation Director, has gathered a fine group of volunteers and have already led a class of them through volunteer orientation. I believe under her leadership our veterans will have lots of fun activities and will be thoroughly engaged!

**Resident Care:** Kelly Odegaard, Administrator, continues to lead the VCCO team well in providing exceptional leadership in the launch of the OVH and care for our veteran residents. I am very pleased with his capacity for all that is required to stand this facility up and look forward to all that he brings to the table. I trust that our veterans are in good hands under his leadership.

**Donations:** The OVH has received many donations. We are currently working to implement these items into use. We have taken the stance that we will be selective in receiving donated items. We have clearly stated on our website what is needed.

## **Important Dates**

Sept 20, Dedication

Oct 23, First resident admitted

Nov 11, Albany Veterans Day Parade

TBA, Received CMS Certification

## **Anticipation**

CMS Certification

Christmas events

USDVA Recognition

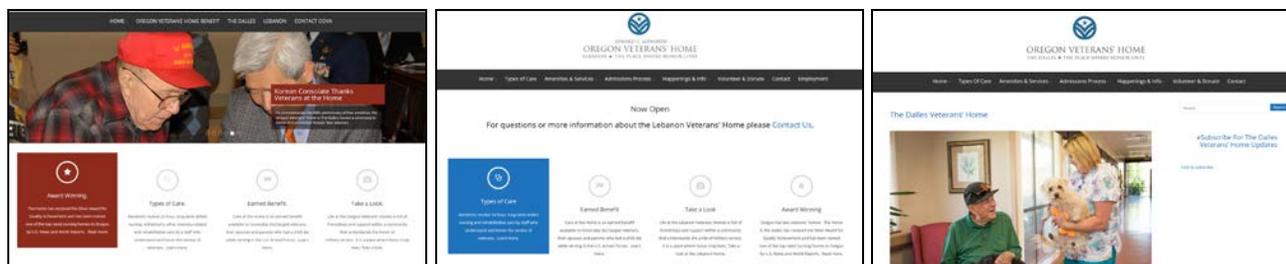
## COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION SERVICES

Nicole Hoeft, Manager

The Public Information section has been focused on a number of large events, projects and initiatives this quarter.

### Oregon Veteran Homes

As construction of the second Veterans' Home in Lebanon was nearing completion and the new facility was preparing to open its doors to the public, the Public Information team completed work on various projects to help the facility launch marketing efforts. The team also doubled efforts to extend the same marketing tools to the facility in The Dalles. Both facilities received a new logo, visually designed to brand Oregon Veterans Home as a program of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs. With each new logo, the websites were launched along with a general Oregon Veterans' Home website.



[www.oregonveteranshomes.com](http://www.oregonveteranshomes.com))

[www.lebanon.oregonveteranshomes.com](http://www.lebanon.oregonveteranshomes.com))

[www.thedalles.oregonveteranshomes.com](http://www.thedalles.oregonveteranshomes.com))

Other activities in support of the veterans' homes include:

- Informational marketing packets are currently in development
- New collateral using the new logos was developed for each facility
- Forms are being created
- The dedication ceremony for Lebanon took place on 9/20/14. Nearly 500 guests attended
- Design of Lebanon van and other branded touches throughout the home
- Development of brochures

## **Suicide Awareness and Prevention Campaign**

On Nov. 5 ODVA launched a public awareness campaign aimed at preventing veteran suicide. Two radio spots will run on all Oregon radio stations through December 21 and 4 billboards located in Bend, Medford, I-5 (Salem), and I-205 (Clackamas) will be in rotation through January. The campaign was paid for using donated funds generated through SB 762. Another campaign is planned for spring 2015.



(Suicide Awareness and Prevention Campaign billboard)

## **Veteran Owned Business State Opportunity Showcase**

On October 17, the Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs hosted the first ever Veteran Owned Business Opportunity Showcase (VOBOS) at Camp Withycombe. The event offered key insights and educational seminars on topics ranging from business set up to how to apply for state and federal business certifications. The event registered more than 180 veteran owned businesses and was packed full of networking and educational opportunities as well as multiple business resources to help get veteran businesses on a clear path to success.

The agency partnered with both state and federal organizations, including Business Oregon, Office of Minority, Women, and Emerging Small Business, Small Business Development Centers, Small Business Administration, GCAP, DAS Procurement Services, USDVA, Secretary of State's office, the Governor's office, ODOT, Dept. of Corrections, and SCORE to develop a three paths system to identify resources that impact success in business. Each path addressed resources dealing with understanding the marketplace, financial and technical support, certifications, and public contracting and procurement.

## **State Website Overhaul**

This quarter, the state EGovernment Board approved the use of "Do-It-Yourself" website templates which enables each state agency to update the look and function of agency online information. The Public Information team is in the beginning stages of project planning for the overhaul, to include the use of internal user and external user surveys to help inform the needs of the web users. Although it is too early to determine a completion date, we are initially aiming for a spring launch.

## **Web Content Coordinator**

On Oct. 6, the team welcomed Sarah Dressler, ODVA Web Content Coordinator. This is a new position within the Communications section. With the successful efforts to increase online outreach to the veteran community in the last 2 years, the need for a dedicated web content coordinator to assist in the management of the agency's online content was identified. Her primary responsibilities span content

development and management of the agency's state website, blog, county blogs, eSubscribe system, eVetsNews and other social media and online initiatives.

### 2013 TYD and Current 2014 Q1-Q3 Online and Print Impact

Method	2013 TYD	2014 TYD
Website	463,087 Total Page Views 245,880 Total Unique Visitors	362,144 YTD Page Views 164,011 YTD Unique Visitors
Blog	394,470 Total Page Views 29,426 Total Unique Visitors	695,166 YTD Page Views 38,273 YTD Unique Visitors
Facebook	1,449 Total Likes	1,921 Total Likes
eSubscribe	12,108 Total Subscribers 24,981 Total Subscriptions	12,306 Total Subscribers 31,246 Q3 (Total) Subscriptions
Twitter	N/A	90 Followers
YouTube	N/A	3,000 Views
Veteran Benefit Magazine (Print)	125,000	85,000
ePublish	N/A	3,962 Reads 10,287 Impressions
Vets News (Print)	80,500 Issues	86,000 Issues
Vets News (eNewsletter)	1,024 Subscribers	1,354 Subscribers
CVSO websites	38,819 Total Visits 15,120 Unique Visitors	170,873 Total Visits 42,793 Total Unique Visitors
Home Loan site	50,381 Total Page Views 6,296 Unique Visitors	136,805 Total Page Views 25,542 Unique Visitors
Oregon Veterans Home	N/A	13,204 Total Page Views 2,578 Unique Visitors
Lebanon Oregon Veterans Home	N/A	33,837 Total Page Views 3,851 Unique Visitors
The Dalles Oregon Veterans Home	N/A	4,776 Total Page Views 324 Unique Visitors

## **Information Services**

Over the last year we have completed 23 major IT projects and continue to move forward with over 40 new ones. Overall the agency has an 8 year project portfolio, much of it revolving around the modernization of all legacy IT systems and the removal of information silo's between agency departments.

The first step in this process is the creation of a centralized database of all veterans' that contact the agency. This will allow us to increase efficiency and provide better customer service by providing better outreach and tracking the veteran through all the various departments that he or she interacts with. Our hope is that it will further assist ODVA to ensure the veteran is fully aware of any programs that he or she is not yet utilizing that may be of benefit. This database is part of a 2015-17 biennium budget ask and with any luck we hope to kick the project off in October 2015.

Our two priorities moving forward will be the migration of our conservatorship system to a more sustainable system that will better meet veteran needs for the next 5-7 years. Our 2<sup>nd</sup> priority is to replace our legacy home loan origination system that has just gone end of life with a new streamlined solution. Both projects are in progress now and we expect them to run through the next year.

Lastly, the OVH Lebanon facility IT infrastructure project successfully completed today! While partnering with Radcomp, a local IT group, we are happy to report that the Lebanon home has a state of the art network and infrastructure in place to ensure the veterans it serves are well cared for years to come.