



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Department of Veterans' Affairs

700 Summer St NE
Salem, OR 97301-1285

SERVING
OREGON VETERANS
SINCE 1945

August 29, 2011

The Honorable John A. Kitzhaber
Governor of Oregon
State Capitol Building
Salem, Oregon 97310

Dear Governor Kitzhaber:

The Chair of the Advisory Committee to the Department of Veterans' Affairs has requested that I submit the enclosed annual report of the Committee to you on his behalf.

Sincerely,

Jim Willis
Director



2011 Advisory Committee Report
to
Governor Kitzhaber



Oregon Department
of Veterans' Affairs
700 Summer St NE
Salem, OR 97801

2011 ANNUAL REPORT
TO GOVERNOR JOHN A. KITZHABER
FROM
THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO THE DIRECTOR OF
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS' AFFAIRS

Current Advisory Committee Membership -

Joseph Ryan Howell, *Chair* – Albany

Eugene J. LaBonte – Grand Ronde

Irv Fletcher – Woodburn

David Fairclo – Bend

Gerard F. Lorang, *Vice Chair* – Portland

Charles E. Schmidt – Hines

Kevin J. Owens, *Secretary* – North Bend

Tino E. Ornelas – Beaverton

2011 REPORT

This annual report covers operation of the Oregon Department Affairs and the activities of your advisory committee for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011. The report is issued in compliance with ORS 406.220 and contains information selected by appointed members of the Advisory Committee to the Director of the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA).

An overview of the programs and services available through ODVA is included in this report as well as key actions or events that took place in this fiscal reporting

period that relate to these programs. ODVA's major programs include Veterans' Services, Veterans' Home Loans and the Oregon Veterans' Home. Highlights and legislative information follows each overview.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE UPDATE

All nine positions of the advisory committee were filled during most of this reporting period. In July 2011 Nancy Visser resigned due to a relocation to the east coast. All current members and officers are listed at the beginning of this report. The diversity and knowledge of the Committee members continues to be an asset for the issues faced by the Committee and in reviewing issues that face all veterans in Oregon.

Nanci L. Visser was appointed to the Committee in August 2009 to fill the vacancy resulting from the expiration of Evelyn Anderson's eligibility. Her professional attitude and work ethic along with her dedication to the Committee will be missed.

In continuing to be more accessible to veterans across the state, the Committee held two of its quarterly meetings in locations other than the Department's headquarters in Salem. The September 15, 2010 meeting was held at the American Legion Post 34 in North Bend and the June 1, 2011 meeting took place

at American Legion Post 16 of Roseburg. The Committee will continue to coordinate these off-site meetings.

Since the Advisory Committee was established in 1945, it has held a distinctive and fundamental role as advisors to the Director and other leadership staff on matters concerning the administration of ODVA. This Committee has been fortunate as it continues to enjoy an excellent working relationship with Director Jim Willis who is in his ninth year as Director of the Department. The Committee thinks highly of Director Willis' continuing work in creating partnerships to aid in delivering services to veterans as well as working to strengthen existing relationships with federal, state, and local governments and their agencies. A significant amount of time and work is put forth by Director Willis in making these relationships fruitful and beneficial to Oregon's veterans. The Committee believes the skillful administration of the Department by Director Willis and his leadership staff is a reflection of their true passion and commitment to veterans. Director Willis was presented the Small Business Administration's state and regional Veteran Small Business Champion award on June 2, 2010. Several members of the Committee were in attendance.

During this fiscal period the Department had several significant projects which included an increase in outreach, the 2011 legislative session and budget related issues. Committee members feel that the Department focused on making decisions

that would reduce loss of services to veterans while continuing to maintain sound business and financial operations, especially in the continued depressed economic climate that Oregon and the nation are facing.

This legislative session, those employees who worked primarily with legislative members and policy committees did an outstanding and professional job. They went above and beyond to keep members informed and responded promptly to all legislative inquiries. Legislative members recognized and appreciated the great work of the ODVA staff during their committee hearings.

Upon the closing of the session 25 bills relating to veterans had passed dealing with employment, recognition, reintegration, education and outreach. These bills are significant in providing the services and assistance needed by the nation's most diverse scope of veterans in its history.

There were a few special bills that passed that honor the states commitment and recognition of all veterans. The Committee was delighted with the passing of SB 951 and SB 74. SB 951 designates June 25 of each year as Korean War Veterans Honor Day and SB 74 designates March 30 of each year as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day. These bills impact the largest section of surviving veterans and officially recognizes the courage and heroism of their military service.

Another bill that was passed by legislature was HB 3416, which established the WWII Memorial Task Force. This bill allows the solicitation of private funds, design development and the construction of a memorial to honor Oregon's World War II veterans and those who supported them here at home to be built on the grounds of the State Capitol. ODVA is assisting this Task Force with staffing. The Committee supports this effort and is glad that there will be an official Oregon memorial that pays tribute to WWII veterans.

Another significant bill positively impacts veterans in this state is the passage of HB 3207 that requires public employers to interview veterans applying for civic positions if the veteran demonstrates that their military education and skills meet the minimum qualifications for the position.

Bills focused on outreach, HB 2403 and SB 241 increase the ability of ODVA to reach veterans by partnering with other state agencies who have a lot of contact with the public. These bills will allow the Department to expand its reach to veterans who would not necessarily seek information about benefits they have earned. By making contact through other state agencies and their satellite offices, the outreach efforts utilize resources that already exist.

The Committee is impressed with the Department's dedication to recognize all opportunities to participate in outreach activities.

One item that has greatly disappointed the Committee is the non-passage of HB 2402 that allocated General Fund to ODVA to continue the Campus Veteran Service Officer (VSO) program. The Campus VSO Program was originally funded as a pilot program by ODVA with the understanding that if the program was successful, the legislature would fund the program. Because of the economy, the legislature was forced to make many tough decisions, and even though the program was a success and supported by the legislative members, funding was not approved.

A concern that the Committee continues to bring forth is that of the funding for the Veterans' Services program. A change took place when the Department was asked to supplement a loss of General Fund revenues from the Home Loan program during the 1987-89 biennium. Since that biennium the Department has sought to regain this General Fund support. With revenues from the home loan program continually decreasing due to the housing crisis, there is concern about the Department's ability to maintain the future funding for this agency. The Committee is hopeful that full General Funding will be re-instated.

ODVA continues to be committed in ensuring information regarding its programs and services is accessible by the public and all those who might benefit from them. The Committee admires the aggressive work of the Public Information staff in continually providing a timely response to design and development requests for the Department. Tremendous time and effort continue to go into the review and

development of both printed materials and the utilization of other forms of media technologies. The Committee and the Department understand the evolution of communication technologies and regularly reviews when and how these tools can best be used to serve veterans. Currently the Department utilizes the internet via a state website and has developed a page on Facebook. The Public Information staff makes every effort to produce quality, market appropriate materials in an economic manner they also maintain a commitment to review existing agency products for cost saving solutions that will not compromise quality.

The Department produced a book to mark the Oregon sesquicentennial in December 2010 titled 150 Years of Oregon Veterans . The Department is selling the book to the public with the proceeds benefiting the Oregon Veterans Home. The book has received a lot of media attention for its original and historical content.

In April the Department announced that Lebanon, Oregon would be the location of the second Oregon Veterans' Home. This announcement followed months of review by an evaluation team of the submissions by five counties, including onsite evaluations of the proposed locations.

In November 2010 groundbreaking took place in The Dalles at the current Oregon Veterans' Home for the new Stan and Jean Adams Community Center. This project has been needed since the Home currently does not have a single location in

the Home that all residents are able to come together at one time to enjoy special meals, activities or events. The completion and dedication of the Center is scheduled for October 2011.

Committee members continue to be troubled by the number of tragic deaths from suicide among the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. The Department developed a Suicide Prevention Campaign and continues to provide materials and conduct outreach to other agencies and first responders. This prevention program is ongoing and the Committee strongly supports the campaign. Director Willis continues to respectfully represent your office at national, regional, state and local conventions, meetings and other veteran related events. He currently serves as Chair of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee as well as Far West District Vice President of the National Association of State Departments of Veterans Affairs (NASDVA). The Far West District includes the states of Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, American Samoa, Guam and the Northern Mariana Islands. Oregon has been chosen to host this year's NASDVA conference where the leadership from all over the country will meet. The Department is planning the event which will held in Lincoln City, September 22 – 25, 2011. Several committee members plan to attend.

Key issues that were championed by NASDVA during this fiscal period include:

- VA claims backlog and solutions

- Increased priority for senior veterans as it relates to pension and aid & assistance payments
- The success and/or improvement of the Chapter 33 Post 9/11 GI Bill
- The new VA rules as they pertain to PTSD
- The decentralization of federal VA functions such as conservatorship, pension, the GI Bill, etc.

The Committee backs Director Willis in his leadership role with NASDVA and commends his dedication to ensuring that the concerns and issues important to veterans in Oregon are communicated to the veteran department leaders across the nation.

Director Willis continues to make every effort to attend the funerals or memorial services for any Oregon service member killed while serving this country. The Committee applauds the Department's ongoing outreach to Gold Star Wives and Families. The Department continues to hold memorial services each Veterans Day and Memorial Day at the Afghan-Iraqi Freedom Memorial located on the grounds of the Oregon Veterans' Building in Salem. All Gold Star families are invited to attend.

The Department continues to work with the Oregon National Guard and its Reintegration Team and provides veteran service officers at demobilizations to help ensure as smooth a transition for Oregon's returning service members.

The Committee is aware of the complex and difficult circumstances that many of these returning service members and their families face. It is the commitment of the Department to provide information and access to services for all veterans.

The Department has experienced some major personnel changes during the latter part of this fiscal period. Deputy Director Paula Brown resigned her position effective March 30, 2011. Her tremendous repose with veterans and her dedication to serve them and ensure that they received the services and assistance they needed. She served as Deputy for approximately nine years. She provided immense leadership and her passion will be greatly missed. Effective June 1, former Veteran' Services Administrator for ODVA, Val Conley, was appointed as Deputy. Tom Mann was appointed as the new Veterans' Services Administrator effective the same date.

Another longtime employee retired after 33 years with ODVA. Edda Markey had served the last nine years as the Director's Executive Assistant. She was responsible for contact and preparation of the quarterly meetings of the Committee and all members will truly miss her. Sue Shaffer has been appointed by the Director as his new Executive Assistant.

The Committee is pleased that you chose to select Cameron Smith as your Military and Veteran Affairs Policy Advisor. Cameron has already attended a Committee meeting and introduced himself to the veterans in attendance.

Each Committee member has pledged to take action in our own communities to make certain that actions are taking place to evaluate which services and resources can be made available in each county. Our newest veterans are more likely to represent the largest fraction of those in our communities that are impacted by active duty service. For many veterans and their families, a long-term struggle lies ahead and we need to continue to stand beside them doing our best to see that they receive the help and tools they need and deserve.

Committee members are provided numerous opportunities to enhance their knowledge of the operational areas of the Department as well as getting acquainted with staff. This availability and helpfulness of the Department has proven beneficial to the Committee when it is necessary to better understand issues and their impact on veterans in Oregon as well as any impact to the operation of the Department.

ODVA MISSION AND GOALS

For more than 65 years, the Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs has provided quality service to veterans, their dependents and survivors. The Committee continues to witness a high level of commitment by the Department to its mission to recognize and honor veterans and their families while also maintaining a high quality of service.

ODVA MISSION

The Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs (ODVA), with the support of our citizens, recognizes and honors Oregon's veterans and their families by providing the highest quality programs, service and benefits.

GOALS

1. Provide essential services to meet the evolving needs of veterans and their families.
2. Maintain the fiscal integrity and sustainability of ODVA's programs, services, and benefits.
3. Increase home ownership opportunities for Oregon's veterans.

4. Provide excellent service to veterans, their families and other Department customers.
5. Maximize the receipt of federal dollars of Oregon's veterans and their families.
6. Maintain the affordability and highest quality of care for residents at the Oregon Veterans' Home.
7. Increase awareness and delivery of all Department programs, services and benefits through technology outreach and partnerships.

Veterans' Services program

Veterans' Services provides a variety of services through veteran benefits counseling, claims representation and prosecution, conservatorship services, educational assistance and service delivery partnerships across the state. The Department's primary goal is to ensure that Oregon veterans obtain all of the benefits that they earned as a result of their military service.

Veterans' Services includes several key operations areas of the Department. These are representation of veterans whom they assist in filing claims for benefits from the Federal Department of Veterans Affairs and going before the federal appeals boards when claims are denied. Also under the Veterans' Services title is the Conservatorship program in which the Department is appointed as conservator for a veteran or family member of a veteran. Trust Officers at the Department handle the finances and help protect these vulnerable from fraud or financial abuse by paying their bills, allocating monies as needed and ensuring the client is living at a level of reasonable quality. Another key area is the training and certification of state and county veteran service officers.

The Advisory Committee's Subcommittee on Veterans' Services met quarterly with Senior Staff and leadership of the Veterans' Services Program, participating in productive discussions on activities, programs and issues. The Committee

recognizes the value of the readiness of the staff at the Department to meet with the subcommittee members.

The most important impact on the Veterans Services is the economy and budget reductions limiting funds. A program that was previously mentioned that will not continue in this biennium is the Campus Veteran Service Officer Program. It will be difficult to find staff or county veteran service officers that will be able to absorb that outreach.

Senate Bill 338 was passed during this latest legislative session; it creates a task force to ensure community colleges implement the Dependents Tuition Waiver program with eligibility requirements that reflect what is in statute. The Oregon University System has already implemented this state benefit according to statute and the community colleges are being encouraged by ODVA to follow suit.

Despite the reduction of funds the Department remains dedicated to Outreach. Many of the outreach projects are conducted by the Veterans' Services personnel and sometimes in partnership with other organizations or agencies. The Department consistently puts forth significant effort to enhance and expand its already extensive outreach operations. Regular outreach activity by the Department includes but is not limited to veterans who are; incarcerated, hospitalized, homebound, and homeless. Outreach is provided to women veterans, and all efforts

are made to educate veterans and those they come in contact with about military sexual trauma (MST). MST does not only impact women veterans but there is a dramatic increase in the numbers of females serving in the recent conflicts and MST has been revealed to be a prevalent issue among them. The Department also does outreach at job fairs, stand downs, home shows, and numerous veteran-related events around the state.

During the 2011 legislative session, HB 2403 and SB 241 were passed allowing the Department to reach veterans by partnering with other state agencies. HB 2403 ensures that Oregon's major state agencies work with ODVA and the Military Department on reintegration issues. SB 241 is a companion bill that seeks to have state agencies ask their clients if they have served in the military and if so provide information about veteran benefits. The goal is that if a veteran contacts a state agency anywhere in the state, they will be able to access information about veteran benefits.

Director Willis and outreach staff continue to attend tribal events and tribal pow wows. The Department often invites the Grand Ronde Honor Guard to participate in ODVA ceremonies to honor and remember veterans. There exists a mutual feeling of brotherhood between Director Willis, the Department and many of the leaders of Oregon's nine federally recognized tribes.

Val Conley, previously the Administrator of Veterans' Services and the current Deputy Director, serves as the Oregon Women Veterans Coordinator. She is a member of the National Women Veterans State Coordinators and was recently elected president of the organization. Conley also heads the planning and production of the Department's semi-annual Women Veterans Conferences. The 2012 Women Veterans Conference is currently in the planning stages. These conferences continue to be a conduit for information regarding women veteran issues and Veteran benefits and are always very well received. Conley also serves on the Women Veterans' Health Care task force that will examine health care issues facing women veterans.

Another honor was bestowed on Conley as she was chosen as the 2010 Ruby Award recipient by Soroptimist of Salem. The Soroptimist Ruby Award is designed to honor women who are working to improve the lives of women and girls. It is intended to recognize work that helps promote the issues that are important to soroptimist members. The Committee commends Conley for her continued hard work to provide services and outreach to women.

Members of the Committee recognize the importance in addressing the issues of women veterans' health care in order to ensure that female veterans are provided the help and quality health care they deserve. The treatment and care of our

returning veterans, male and female, is an issue likely to impact the state for decades to come.

As previously stated Val Conley has been appointed by Director Willis to serve as the Department's Deputy Director effective June 1, 2011. Her years of experience as Administrator of the Veterans' Services area will greatly serve her as she handles the duties and issues of her new position.

The Department continues to provide semi-annual training for County Veterans Service Officers and has incorporated the certification process into this training. The Committee supports the development of certification and training standards and believes that it will provide uniformity in the level of service provided to veterans across the state. Committee members feel this program is important in ensuring that veterans receive valid and consistent information and service.

The number of veterans in the population and the concentrations that are aging and seeking benefits and health care for the first time or newly returning from active-duty service and are in need of assistance the overall workload continues to grow for the Department's veterans service officers in Salem and Portland. Their outstanding work is reflected in the national rankings of average federal compensation dollars for Oregon veterans. The Committee salutes their high-quality work and diligence to assist veterans to receive all the benefits they are entitled.

These federal dollars coming to Oregon along with veterans who are being enrolled into the VA health care program help to maintain Oregon's financial stability. The current economic climate has resulted in more veterans seeking these entitlements and will likely continue until economic stability is restored.

The Committee feels strongly that the Department and its staff reflect a professional character that directly results from knowledge and sincere dedication to serve veterans. Your Advisory Committee has confidence that ODVA's Veterans' Services program will continue to operate in this manner.

Highlights

1. The Department worked diligently to assist 2011 legislative members and specifically the Senate and House Veterans Committees. Availability to answer questions and experienced testimony aided to pass bills for veterans.
2. The focus on outreach continues to expand and be a priority that includes the use of technology and media resources available to the Department as well as the help of major state agencies.
3. The Department participates in events including demobilizations, Gold Star family outreach, Stand downs, to support efforts to maintain the health and well-being of veterans and their families during reintegration and beyond.
4. The Veterans Services staff continues to offer a consistent level of high quality service while demand for services and caseloads continues to increase.

Legislation

HB 2402 asked for general funding for the Campus Veteran Services Program. This program greatly increased the number of veterans that were being assisted in obtaining their veteran benefits, especially the veterans of the current conflicts. Unfortunately, this legislation was not funded due to budget restrictions.

The Senate and House are aware of the demands and needs of veterans of all ages in Oregon. Department staff continues to work closely with the legislative members and their staff to educate and clarify any issues or questions that may arise concerning proposed veteran legislation.

The Department has kept its focus on limiting the impact on services to veterans and their families during this budget process. ODVA is pleased that other agencies are helping in reaching veterans with information that can lead to a significant enhancement of their quality of life.

Veterans' Home Loans **ORVET home loan program**

The Committee would like to report that its Veterans' Home Loan subcommittee met quarterly with the Veteran Home Loan program staff and the Finance subcommittee met with senior Financial Services staff.

As the state continues to face a down turned economy the Department continues to face challenges in the Oregon Veterans' Home Loan Program (ORVETS home loans). This coupled with the decline in home values and high unemployment has contributed to a flooded housing market and large numbers of foreclosed properties nationwide. These factors are leading some of the Department's veteran home buyers no choice but to put off home buying until conditions improve and current veteran home owners to have to abandon their mortgage agreements with the Department. There has been an increase of foreclosed properties for the Department during this fiscal period.

The Committee is concerned with the impact that this continuing trend will have on the state and on the Department. The housing market is expected to remain unstable and the Department is competing in a much slower market.

Despite these daunting challenges the Committee continues to be impressed with Department's delinquency rates, which are significantly lower than the national

average. The Department and its policies and practices of working closely from the qualifying process for a veteran home loan and at the first indication of repayment difficulty has for many years; helped to prevent the need for more serious delinquency action. Despite this practice it is not a factor the Department can control and will be impacted as long as these factors remain.

The Committee appreciates the Department's dedication to continuing good business practices and its willingness to intervene early on in order to help veterans keep their homes. With the current economic trends it will continue to be a difficult time for many homeowners and the Department will likely face an increase of delinquency cases. The Committee has confidence that the Department will continue to operate with sound business practices and solid operation policies.

In November 2010, voters passed Measure 70, which amended the Oregon constitution to eliminate the 30-year restriction on ODVA's Veterans' Home Loan program.

The Committee encourages continued efforts to enhance the marketing of Oregon Veterans' Home Loans along with the other services the Department offers. The current efforts to retain and expand partnerships with mortgage brokers and lenders who are still doing business in Oregon or have reorganized will be an ongoing focus of the Department. The Department's leadership and their successful

management of the home loan program during these challenging economic times continues to reassure the Committee.

The Committee remains cautiously optimistic about the future of the loan program. We believe it is important that the Oregon Veterans' Home Loan program continues to provide veterans the opportunity to improve their quality of life by owning a home.

Highlights

1. The Department's Delinquency rates remain low considering the state of Oregon's economy and a stale housing market. The Department does seem to be weathering a rough period and only the improvement of the economy and lowering unemployment rates can turn things around.
2. Outreach and creative marketing efforts continue to be a focus for the Department.
3. State legislation to remove the 30-year limit and make the ORVET home loan program a lifetime benefit passed unanimously in November 2010 which increases the number of potential veteran home-buyers who may be eligible for the ORVET home loan program.
4. Improved marketing of the Department's state owned properties via redesigned flyers, and online listings.

Legislation

There were no bills during the 2011 legislative session that would have directly impacted the veteran home loan program.

Oregon Veterans' Home

Currently, the Oregon Veterans' Home, located in The Dalles, is the only skilled nursing care facility in Oregon built for, and dedicated to, veterans. The Home provides skilled nursing care, physical therapy, and Alzheimer's and dementia related care to some of Oregon's most vulnerable veterans. The single-story 75,000 square foot facility provides 151 resident beds in a home-like environment and is operated with a philosophy of maximum resident independence, and residents are encouraged to function at their highest possible level.

Many generous individuals and organizations volunteer at the Home and sponsor activities or special occasion meals that enhance the home-like environment. The Committee is glad to see that this interaction and partnering continues to thrive with both Oregon's veteran community and the local community of The Dalles.

Results of surveys conducted by Pinnacle Consulting, a firm employed by the Veteran's Care Centers of Oregon (VCCO), the current contractor that operates the Home, have continued to indicate a high level of satisfaction. Pinnacle interviews both residents and families of residents, asking questions about all aspects of the Home's operation. For the calendar year 2009, the Home was rated "best in Class" in almost all surveyed areas. Best in class status is achieved by ranking at or above the 90th percentile.

Committee members regularly visit the Home. Member Irv Fletcher makes a trip to visit each month and participates in activities at the Home. We greatly appreciate the supportive, therapeutic, home-like environment that includes the veteran's family, fellow veterans and the Home's staff.

In keeping with the positive atmosphere created at the Home the Committee is excited about the upcoming construction of a Community Center that will provide a multipurpose area for the Home's residents to converge together for activities.

This center will be named after Stan Adams, a Medal of Honor recipient, and his wife Jean. Stan was a resident of the Home and after Stan's death, Jean continued being active as a volunteer. When Mrs. Adams recently passed away, she left part of her estate to the Home. Stan's medals and uniform are on display and a painting of the couple will hang in the Community Center. October 1, 2011 is the anticipated opening date of the center.

The Director announced in April 2010 that the agency would be building a second Veterans' Home in Linn County at a site in Lebanon. This announcement followed a painstaking job by a site evaluation team that visited each proposed site and reviewed the proposals that were submitted. The site evaluation committee considered a variety of criteria and conducted meticulous reviews of each site and

proposal before making the decision to locate the second Veterans' Home in Lebanon.

Recently a report by the the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determined the need for 800 additional skilled nursing beds for veterans in Oregon. Even with the second Veterans' Home being built, Oregon will still fall short of that need. HB 2578 and HB 3208 attempts to address this need by authorizing a third Veterans' Home to be built in Roseburg. Currently there is no federal funding for the project but ODVA has been legislatively authorized to pursue funding..

The Committee salutes ODVA, staff and the operation contractors whose sincere dedication to the quality of care for every resident has resulted in a truly one of a kind, skilled nursing care facility that performs at a high level of excellence. The state can certainly be proud of the superior service that is provided at the Home and the tremendous tribute that this pays to veterans every day.

The Committee feels that this same exemplary service will be provided veterans and their families by the pending second Veterans' Home in Lebanon. With the location being near major populations and within easy access just off of Interstate 5, little difficulty is anticipated in reaching residence census. The veteran

population in Oregon mirrors that of the nation in covering such a large spectrum in age and diversity of needed care. A large percentage of veterans are entering their senior years and are in need of the skilled nursing care such as is provided at the current Oregon Veterans' Home.

Highlights

1. The Home continues to receive favorable rankings from both residents and their families as measured by survey responses to Pinnacle Consulting.
2. Local community and veterans' service organizations continue to provide outreach and activities to residents at the Oregon Veterans' Home in The Dalles.
3. Construction of the new Stan and Jean Adams Community Center is nearly complete and will provide for residents and their families, as well as staff and the community a much needed area for recreational activities, and social opportunities.

Legislation

The passage of HB 3208 allows for the construction of two additional Veterans' Homes in Oregon. HB 2578 authorizes the third Veteran Home to be located in Roseburg.

SUMMARY

The Committee is in full support of the Department of Veterans' Affairs and its mission. We believe that the Department continues to advocate and commendably serve Oregon's veterans in line with its goals and mission.

Witnessing the passion and commitment of ODVA and its staff renews the spirits of the Committee members. As your appointed advisors, we resolutely report that the Department is in very good hands under the leadership of Director Willis and the current leadership staff. Their willingness to listen to those they serve and survey all sides of an issue in order to provide better service speaks to their allegiance.

These qualities and attributes will serve the Department well in the months ahead as the state and the nation continue to struggle with an uncertain economy and budget shortfalls.

The area of outreach will remain an area of tremendous focus as Oregon continues to realize the progressive needs of OIF and OEF veterans. This will likely affect the Department for many decades into the future. The Committee is pleased with the Department's development of new partnerships and the further strengthening of those partnerships that already exist.

The Committee commends the coordinated efforts of the Department and the Legislators in their diligent work on key issues facing Oregon veterans. It is the hope of the Committee that this kind of joint effort will continue in the future with the purpose of focusing on what is in the best interest of veterans and their families.

The Committee members thank you for the opportunity to serve you, the State of Oregon and especially our fellow veterans in this capacity.

This concludes the Committee's report for 2010 - 2011 fiscal period. Questions concerning the content can be directed to:

**Advisory Committee to the Director
Oregon Department of Veterans' Affairs
700 Summer Street NE
Salem OR 97301**

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Howell', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Joseph Ryan Howell, Chair