

DISCLAIMER

Electronic versions of the exhibits in these minutes may not be complete.

This information is supplied as an informational service only and should not be relied upon as an official record.

Original exhibits are on file at the Legislative Counsel Bureau Research Library in Carson City.

Contact the Library at (775) 684-6827 or library@lcb.state.nv.us.

KENNY C. GUINN
Governor



Executive Director
1201 Terminal Way, No. 221
Reno, Nevada 89520
(775) 688-1653
Fax (775) 688-1656

**Northern Nevada Veterans
Memorial Cemetery**
P.O. Box 1919
Fernley, Nevada 89408
(775) 575-4441
Fax (775) 575-5713

STATE OF NEVADA

OFFICE OF VETERANS' SERVICES

Deputy Executive Director
% VA Ambulatory Care Center
1700 Vegas Drive, No. 1719
Las Vegas, Nevada 89106
(702) 636-3070
Fax (702) 636-3079

**Southern Nevada Veterans
Memorial Cemetery**
1900 Buchanan
Boulder City, Nevada 89005
(702) 486-5920
Fax (702) 486-5923

March 14, 2003

Public Safety, Natural Resources, Transportation- Senate-Assembly Sub-committee

Budget Account 2560

Office of Veterans Services

The Nevada Office of Veterans Services is established under NRS 417 to provide assistance and services to veterans, their family members and residents of Nevada serving in the Armed Forces of the United States. In accomplishing this goal, the agency has six programs:

1. Veterans' Benefit Representation
2. Veterans' Cemeteries
3. Veterans' Nursing Home
4. Veteran Guardianship Program
5. Veteran Legislative Issues
6. Veteran Information Clearinghouse

PROGRAMS

Veteran Service representatives are assigned to offices in northern and southern Nevada. These Representatives are responsible for helping veterans and their family members obtain federal services, compensation, and government benefits to which they are entitled. Compensation awards, state-wide, has increased from \$3,967,107 in FY 1999 to \$26,156,565 in FY 2002. This much increase is due to the rapid growth in veteran's population in the state and the aging of the WWII veteran's population. The National ratio of veteran's service officers to veterans in some states is 1 to 8,000: the Nevada ratio is 1 to 30,000.

Under the authority of NRS 417.090(5) the Executive Director serves as a clearing house for the distribution of information relating to veterans benefits. This is done through the publication of brochures, public news releases by fax and e-mail, briefings, public meetings, the Veterans Service Commission, and two Cemetery Advisory Committees which meet quarterly.

The Executive Director of Veterans Services, under the provisions of NRS 417.110 and NRS 160 serves as the court appointed fiduciary guardian for veterans and their dependents who the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs determines to be incompetent to handle their own finances. Currently, there are 29 veteran wards. There are few agencies capable or willing to perform this task and providing this service often allows the incompetent veteran the opportunity to live in the community rather than in an institution.

The Deputy Director oversees the operation of two state veteran's cemeteries, located at Fernley and Boulder City. Federal funds provide development grants and burial fees, the state general funds provide operational expenses. The Boulder City cemetery is considered the second busiest State operated Veterans' Cemetery in the U.S. Currently, 25% of the veterans burials in Nevada are performed at the two state veterans' cemeteries.

A \$3.5 million expansion grant has been awarded for the Fernley cemetery to increase the burial area by 4 acres to a total of 10 acres, a new administration and maintenance buildings. Construction is due to start April 15th. A new master plan, and expansion for the Boulder City cemetery is in the design phase, which will include an additional 6 acres for a total of 30 developed acres. A new maintenance building and area will be included as well as a remodel of the present administration room. These expansion projects are required to keep phase with the projected increase in the use of there two facilities. The Nevada Veteran population is at 230,000 with about 180,000 in Clark County. About 20% of the annual increase are retired Veterans. The death rate of the WWII veterans is expected to increase annually until 2008. This places great stress on a service system that has not grown with the demand for services. The present cemetery work force is at less than 50% of the Federal guidelines for cemeteries of this size.

Funding for the Office of Veterans' Services comes from the general fund, burial reimbursement fees from the Federal Government, and a 5% fee charged to guardianship clients. A burial plot reimbursement of \$300 (increased from \$150 in FY 03) is received for all veterans with war time service (which is 93%) or those whose death was not service connected. Spouse and dependent burials are allowed in the cemeteries for a burial fee of \$350.

NEW PROGRAMS

There are no new programs in this budget submission. A 02-03 CIP contains seed funds for the Boulder City Cemetery expansion. A 04/05 CIP request has been submitted for a \$50,000 feasible study of advanced planning for establishing a Veterans Nursing Home in Northern Nevada.