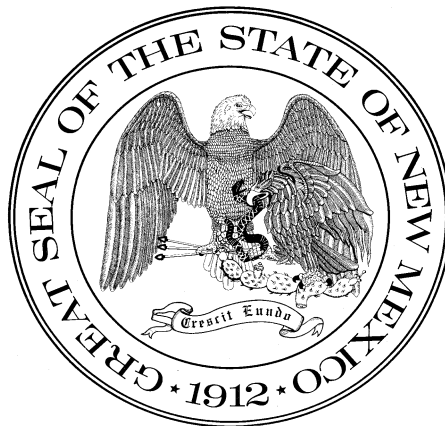


MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

2013
INTERIM
FINAL REPORT



New Mexico Legislature
Legislative Council Service
411 State Capitol
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
2013 INTERIM FINAL REPORT
TABLE OF CONTENTS

2013 Interim Summary

2013 Approved Work Plan and Meeting Schedule

June 6, 2013 Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting Agenda

July 1, 2013 Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting Agenda

August 7, 2013 Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting Agenda

September 3, 2013 Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting Agenda

October 9, 2013 Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting Agenda

November 15, 2013 Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting Agenda

June 6, 2013 Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

July 1, 2013 Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

August 7, 2013 Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

September 3, 2013 Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

October 9, 2013 Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

November 15, 2013 Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Meeting Minutes

2013 INTERIM SUMMARY

MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE 2013 INTERIM EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee (MVAC) was originally created by statute for the 2009 interim and then permanently reauthorized during the Forty-Ninth Legislature, Second Session. Pursuant to Section 2-20-2 NMSA 1978, the MVAC holds hearings in several geographically dispersed areas of the state and hears issues related to military issues and veterans. The MVAC is also tasked with making legislative recommendations to Congress and regulatory recommendations to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States Department of Defense (DOD).

In fulfillment of its statutory duties, the MVAC: held six meetings during the 2013 interim in Roswell, Albuquerque, Santa Fe and Alamogordo; was able to visit Holloman Air Force Base, the New Mexico Military Institute and the New Mexico National Guard Armory headquarters; and held a joint meeting with the Mortgage Finance Authority Act Oversight Committee.

At its initial meeting, the MVAC developed a work plan, later approved by the New Mexico Legislative Council, that identified numerous military and veterans issues of concern.

A number of advocates discussed housing solutions for homeless veterans and for those who are struggling with inadequate living situations. Significant strides have already been made to improve the situation, and it was shown that this is a problem that can be solved with adequate resources.

A hot topic of discussion was the plan for the strategic funding of veterans cemeteries. Legislators and the governor are considering building veterans cemeteries, and the MVAC heard plans for how that will be accomplished.

The MVAC also heard from a number of interested parties regarding the various impacts of the proposed SunZia Southwest Transmission Project. A number of proposed routes for two bi-directional extra-high-voltage electric transmission lines were the subject of much debate, and MVAC members had the opportunity to better assess the project at its meeting in Alamogordo.

Access to state and federal health care is of critical importance to military and veteran communities in New Mexico. The United States Department of Veterans Affairs outlined its eligibility requirements and billing procedures, and other presentations covered transportation to medical service providers, treatment options for posttraumatic stress disorder and options available for family and community support.

The MVAC has an ongoing interest in all things that affect veterans in the state, and to that end, it hears presentations on: the opportunities that exist for veterans at New Mexico's higher education institutions; military base planning; and taxation of veterans.

As part of its community outreach, the MVAC publicly recognized a New Mexico airman

for his contribution to its work. A bill endorsed by the MVAC during the 2012 interim and that passed into law, House Bill 175 (2013), prevents utility companies from charging for the suspension of service or for reconnection due to the deployment of active-duty military personnel. The catalyst for that law, Sergeant Fabian Silva, was recognized by the MVAC at its October meeting.

The Veterans' Services Department, led by Secretary of Veterans' Services Timothy L. Hale and Deputy Secretary of Veterans' Services Alan Martinez, was instrumental in outlining critical issues and securing experts and stakeholders to make presentations before the MVAC.

Finally, the MVAC endorsed three pieces of legislation for the 2014 legislative session.

2013 WORK PLAN AND MEETING SCHEDULE

**2013 APPROVED
WORK PLAN AND MEETING SCHEDULE
for the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

Members

Sen. Richard C. Martinez, Co-Chair
Rep. Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez,
Co-Chair
Sen. William F. Burt
Rep. Nathan "Nate" Cote

Rep. Dianne Miller Hamilton
Sen. Daniel A. Ivey-Soto
Sen. William H. Payne
Rep. Bob Wooley

Advisory Members

Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Rep. Thomas A. Anderson
Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Sen. Carlos R. Cisneros
Rep. George Dodge, Jr.
Rep. Yvette Herrell
Sen. Timothy M. Keller

Sen. John Pinto
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle
Rep. Dennis J. Roch
Rep. Edward C. Sandoval
Rep. Jeff Steinborn
Sen. Lisa A. Torracco

Work Plan

The Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee was first created by statute for the 2009 interim session. The committee was permanently reauthorized by statute during the 2010 regular session. The committee was given various statutory duties, including making an annual report and recommending any necessary legislation to the next session of the legislature and requesting necessary action to Congress, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and the United States Department of Defense. The committee is required to conduct meetings in several geographically dispersed areas of the state and to conduct hearings relating to military issues and veterans' issues. The committee will coordinate, as needed, with other committees regarding presentations of subject matter of common concern.

During the 2013 interim, the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee proposes to explore and discuss the following topics, as time permits:

1. education opportunities and programs offered by state educational institutions and public community colleges, including expanding veterans resource centers to locations throughout the state and touring the New Mexico Military Institute;
2. health care delivery systems for military personnel and veterans, including partnerships between the Veterans' Services Department, Department of Health and United States Bureau of Indian Affairs;

3. issues related to access to care, including the transportation of veterans who reside in rural areas to medical and behavioral health care facilities;

4. support and treatment options for veterans and military personnel with posttraumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, including alternative treatment options, community programs and state and federal partnerships;

5. family support issues and concerns and the programs available to veterans and military personnel and their families from the state and local communities;

6. the prevention of homelessness and support for homeless veterans in areas throughout the state;

7. jobs and business opportunities for veterans, including the implementation and impact of the veterans' preference, the veteran employment tax credit and incubator programs;

8. an update on the base realignment and closure process;

9. a tour of and an update on Holloman Air Force Base;

10. strategic planning by the Veterans' Services Department, including planning for long-term care for aging veterans in the state, cemetery space and the economic impact of veterans on the state; and

11. a review of the Veterans' Services Department Act and discussion of possible changes needed to provide the department with the authority necessary to help ensure that the state can meet veterans' needs.

**Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee
2013 Approved Meeting Schedule**

<u>Date</u>	<u>Location</u>
June 6	Santa Fe, State Capitol
July 1	Roswell, New Mexico Military Institute
August 7*	Albuquerque
September 3	Santa Fe, Santa Fe Armory
October 9	Alamogordo, Holloman Air Force Base
November 15	Santa Fe, State Capitol

*Joint meeting with the Mortgage Finance Authority Act Oversight Committee.

AGENDAS

Revised: May 23, 2013

**TENTATIVE AGENDA
for the
FIRST MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**June 6, 2013
Room 307, State Capitol**

Thursday, June 6

- 9:30 a.m. **Call to Order**
- 9:35 a.m. (1) [Interim Committee Procedures](#)
—Raúl E. Burciaga, Director, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
- 9:45 a.m. (2) [Military and Veterans' Affairs Legislation — 2013 Session](#)
—Pam Stokes, Staff Attorney, LCS
- 10:00 a.m. (3) [Veterans' Services Department \(VSD\) — Overview](#)
—Timothy Hale, Secretary of Veterans' Services
- 11:30 a.m. (4) [Veteran Employment Tax Credit — Status Update](#)
—John C. Tysseling, Ph.D., Chief Economist, Taxation and Revenue
Department
—Alan Martinez, Deputy Secretary, VSD
- 12:00 noon **Lunch**
- 1:00 p.m. (5) [Office of Military Base Planning and Support — Overview](#)
—Hanson Scott, Director, Office of Military Base Planning and
Support
- 2:00 p.m. (6) [Discussion of Focus Areas and Work Plan](#)
—Pam Stokes, Staff Attorney, LCS
- 2:30 p.m. **Adjourn**

Revised: July 8, 2013

**TENTATIVE AGENDA
for the
SECOND MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**July 1, 2013
Daniels Leadership Center, New Mexico Military Institute
101 West College Boulevard
Roswell, New Mexico**

Monday, July 1

- 8:30 a.m. **Call to Order**
- 8:35 a.m. (1) **Welcoming Remarks**
 —Major General Jerry W. Grizzle, (U.S. Army National Guard, Ret.),
 Ph.D., Superintendent, New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI)
- 9:00 a.m. (2) **Strategic Plan and Federal Funding for Veteran Cemeteries in the State**
 —Timothy Hale, Secretary, Veterans' Services Department
- 10:00 a.m. (3) **Access to Health Care — Transportation Options in Southeastern New
Mexico**
 —Magil Duran, President, Southeastern New Mexico Veterans'
 Transportation Network (SENMVTN)
 —Greg Neal, Vice President, SENMVTN
- 10:30 a.m. (4) **Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Health Care in Southeastern New
Mexico**
 —Sonja Brown, Chief, Voluntary Service and Public Affairs Operations,
 New Mexico VA Health Care System
- 11:00 a.m. (5) **Higher Education for Veterans and Active Duty Personnel: Why
Veterans Resource Centers Are Needed on Campus**
 —Lieutenant Commander Marilyn (Mandy) M. Dykman, M.A., U.S.C.G.
 (Ret.), Director, Veterans Resource Center, University of New
 Mexico (UNM)
 —Branden Trujillo, Director, State Approving Agency, Higher Education
 Department
- 12:00 noon **Lunch**
- 1:30 p.m. **Tour of NMMI**
 —Chief Warrant Officer Three Carl Hansen
- 3:00 p.m. **Adjourn**

Revised: August 5, 2013

**TENTATIVE AGENDA
for the
JOINT MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE
and the
MORTGAGE FINANCE AUTHORITY ACT OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**August 7, 2013
St. Joseph Community Health
1516 5th Street NW
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102**

Wednesday, August 7

- 9:00 a.m. **Call to Order**
- 9:05 a.m. (1) **[Homeless Veterans and the Housing First Model](#)**
—Joseph Montoya, Deputy Director of Programs, New Mexico Mortgage
Finance Authority
—Hank Hughes, Executive Director, New Mexico Coalition to End
Homelessness
—Doug Chaplin, Manager, Community Development Division — City of
Albuquerque
—Dennis Potter, Executive Director, Metropolitan Homelessness Project
—Nicole Martinez, Executive Director, Mesilla Valley Community of Hope
- 10:00 a.m. (2) **[New Mexico Veterans Integration Centers \(NMVIC\)](#)**
—Elinor Reiners, Program Director, NMVIC
—Fermin Ortega, Operations Manager, NMVIC
- 11:00 a.m. (3) **[Goodwill Industries of New Mexico: Supportive Services for Veteran
Families \(SSVF\)](#)**
—Mary Martinez Carter, Case Manager, SSVF
—Jim Cochran, Program Manager, SSVF
- 12:00 noon **Lunch**
- 1:00 p.m. (4) **[United South Broadway Corporation \(USBC\): Homeless Prevention
Program](#)**
—Deborah Norman, Outreach Coordinator, USBC

- 2:00 p.m. (5) [New Mexico VA Health Care System: Benefits, Eligibility and Billing](#)
—Kara Catton, Executive Assistant to the Director, New Mexico VA Health
Care System
- 3:00 p.m. (6) [Presbyterian Medical Services Veteran and Family Support Services](#)
—Cheri Nipp, Central Region Director, Presbyterian Medical Services
- 4:00 p.m. (7) [Fort Bayard: Serving the Dreams of Our Veterans](#)
—Tennessee Webb, Principal and Director, GEP Corporation (GEPC)
—M. Teresa Santiago, President and Chief Executive Officer, GEPC
- 4:30 p.m. **Adjourn**

Revised: August 29, 2013

**TENTATIVE AGENDA
for the
FOURTH MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**September 3, 2013
New Mexico National Guard Armory Headquarters
47 Bataan Boulevard
Santa Fe, NM 87508**

Tuesday, September 3

- 9:00 a.m. **Call to Order**
- 9:05 a.m. (1) [Welcome, Update on the National Guard and the Family Readiness Program](#)
 —Brigadier General Andrew E. Salas, Adjutant General, New Mexico
 National Guard
- 10:00 a.m. (2) ["Freedom to Choose" Campaign to Improve Veterans' Access to Medical Marijuana for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder and Other Wounds of War](#)
 —Emily Kaltenbach, State Director, Drug Policy Alliance
- 11:00 a.m. (3) [Veterans Preference: Challenges and Costs](#)
 —Lawrence Maxwell, State Purchasing Agent and Director, General
 Services Department
- 12:00 noon **Lunch**
- 1:00 p.m. (4) [The Service Member Child Custody Act](#)
 —Alan Martinez, Deputy Secretary, Veterans' Services Department
 —Amanda Pagan, Attorney and Principal, New Mexico Family Law, P.C.,
 and Chief Warrant Officer Two, United States Army
- 1:30 p.m. (5) [Update of Business Outreach to Veterans](#)
 —Joseph C. Long, Director, Veterans Business Outreach Center
- 2:30 p.m. (6) [Veterans Business Incubators](#)
 —Dr. Kevin Boberg, Director and Chief Executive Officer, Arrowhead
 Center, New Mexico State University
- 3:30 p.m. **Adjourn**

Revised: October 7, 2013

**TENTATIVE AGENDA
for the
FIFTH MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**October 9, 2013
Sgt. Willie Estrada Memorial Civic Center
800 1st Street
Alamogordo**

Wednesday, October 9

- 9:00 a.m. **Call to Order**
- 9:05 a.m. (1) **[Overview of New Mexico State University's \(NMSU\) Military and Veterans Affairs Program](#)**
—Jacobó Varela, Assistant Registrar, NMSU
- 9:45 a.m. (2) **[Update on White Sands Missile Range \(WSMR\)](#)**
—Dan Hicks, Deputy to the Executive Director, WSMR
- 10:45 a.m. (3) **[Update on SunZia](#)**
—Tom Wray, Project Manager, SunZia Southwest Transmission Project
- 12:00 noon (4) **[Working Lunch: Update on Fort Stanton](#)**
—Lieutenant Colonel Don Root, USAF (retired), Secretary, Lincoln and Otero Counties Leadership Council (LOCLC)
—Larry Holt, Volunteer Administrator, Fort Stanton, and Member, LOCLC
- 12:45 p.m. (5) **[Update on Holloman Air Force Base](#)**
—Colonel Andrew A. Croft, Commander, 49th Wing, Holloman Air Force Base
- 1:30 p.m. **Recognition of Air Force Technical Sergeant Fabian Silva**
- 1:45 p.m. **Tour of Holloman Air Force Base (Open to Legislators and Staff Only)**
—Tom Fuller, Director, Community Relations, 49th Wing, Holloman Air Force Base
—Second Lieutenant Raquel Longmire, Deputy Public Affairs Chief, 49th Wing, Holloman Air Force Base
- 4:30 p.m. **Adjourn**

Revised: January 14, 2014

**TENTATIVE AGENDA
for the
SIXTH MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**November 15, 2013
Room 311, State Capitol
Santa Fe**

Friday, November 15

9:00 a.m. **Call to Order**

- 9:05 a.m. (1) **Fort Bayard Construction Update**
—Steve Best, Executive Director, Memorial Service Network III, National Cemetery Administration (NCA), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA)
—Steve Davis, Engineer, Design and Construction Service, NCA, VA
—Glenn Madderom, Chief, Cemetery Development and Improvement Service, NCA, VA

Legislation to Consider for Endorsement

- 10:00 a.m. (2) **Pilot Project to Treat Veterans with Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Using Virtual Reality Treatment Devices**
—Representative Nate Gentry
- 10:30 a.m. (3) **The Service Member Child Custody Act**
—Alan Martinez, Deputy Secretary, Veterans' Services Department
—Amanda Pagan, Attorney and Principal, New Mexico Family Law, P.C., and Chief Warrant Officer Two, United States Army
- 11:00 a.m. (4) **Appropriation to Improve and Maintain the Fort Stanton Cemetery**
—Representative Bob Wooley
- 11:30 a.m. (5) **Memorial to Have the 2014 Interim Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Consider Changes to the Veteran-Owned Business Preference for State Purchases**
—TBD
- 12:00 noon **Adjourn**

MINUTES

**MINUTES
of the
FIRST MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**June 6, 2013
State Capitol, Room 307
Santa Fe**

The first meeting of the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee was called to order by Representative Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez, co-chair, on June 6, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. in Room 307 of the State Capitol in Santa Fe.

Present

Sen. Richard C. Martinez, Co-Chair
Rep. Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez, Co-Chair
Sen. William F. Burt
Rep. Dianne Miller Hamilton
Sen. Daniel A. Ivey-Soto
Sen. William H. Payne
Rep. Bob Wooley

Absent

Rep. Nathan "Nate" Cote

Advisory Members

Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Sen. Carlos R. Cisneros
Rep. Yvette Herrell
Sen. John Pinto
Rep. Edward C. Sandoval

Rep. Thomas A. Anderson
Rep. George Dodge, Jr.
Sen. Timothy M. Keller
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle
Rep. Dennis J. Roch
Rep. Jeff Steinborn
Sen. Lisa A. Torracco

Guest Legislators

Rep. Sandra D. Jeff
Sen. Nancy Rodriguez

Staff

Pam Stokes, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Kathleen Dexter, Researcher, LCS
John Butrick, Law School Intern, LCS

Guest List

The guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Copies of all handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file.

Thursday, June 6

Interim Committee Procedures

Raúl E. Burciaga, director of the LCS, gave an overview of the statutes that govern the committee's operations, including the so-called "blocking provision", which states that no action shall be taken by the committee if a majority of the total membership from either chamber rejects the action. He pointed out that while a quorum for the committee is five voting members, there is no requirement that both political parties or both chambers be represented among the quorum. Once a quorum is established, it is presumed to continue for the duration of the meeting unless the lack of a quorum is raised by a member or disclosed upon a roll-call vote. Short of establishing a quorum, the committee can operate as a subcommittee and take testimony so long as the number of voting members present, plus advisory members and legislators attending the meeting as one of their extra days, equals five. All meetings after September 30 must be held at the State Capitol unless an out-of-town meeting after that date is approved by the New Mexico Legislative Council.

Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee Legislation from 2013 Session

Ms. Stokes gave an overview of legislation endorsed by the committee for the 2013 session that was signed into law, including:

- (1) House Bill 180 (Chapter 33) — expedited professional licensure for military service members, their spouses and recent veterans;
- (2) House Judiciary Committee Substitute for House Bill 175 (Chapter 193) and Senate Public Affairs Committee Substitute for Senate Bill 574 (Chapter 35) — suspension without penalty, as well as reconnection without charge, of county, municipal, utility and telecommunications services while a service member is deployed for longer than 30 days;
- (3) House Bill 247 (Chapter 34) — military war veteran scholarship program and fund;
- (4) Senate Bill 195 (Chapter 2) — designation of April as "Bataan-Corregidor Heritage Month";
- (5) House Joint Memorial 3 — state approving agencies and their role in developing legislation that affects New Mexico veteran education benefits; and
- (6) House Joint Memorial 4 — designation of March 29, 2013 as "Vietnam Veterans Day".

Two bills that were endorsed by the committee but that did not pass would have: (1) created an income tax credit for armed forces retainer pay; and (2) enacted the Service Member Child Custody Act.

In discussion, Ms. Stokes and committee members noted the need to reintroduce the Service Member Child Custody Act in the 2014 session, if the topic is included in the governor's proclamation. Ms. Stokes also explained that an appropriation in the General Appropriation Act of 2013 to establish a Native American Veterans' Division in the Veterans' Services Department (VSD) is void because it was contingent on passage of a bill to establish the division in statute, and that bill failed.

VSD Overview

Secretary of Veterans' Services Timothy L. Hale gave an overview of U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and VSD programs for New Mexico veterans. The state has a relatively high percentage of veterans at 12 percent. While nearly half of them live in the greater Albuquerque area, where the VA hospital is housed, the rest — nearly 80,000 veterans — are spread around the state in areas the VA has designated as "rural", "highly rural" or "frontier". Difficulty accessing VA services is the top complaint the VSD receives, in part because of the distances the non-urban veterans must travel. The VA's goal is to enroll all qualified veterans in the system within 45 days of release from active duty; however, in light of the challenges posed by New Mexico's predominately rural nature, the VSD has set a goal of 180 days and has established 17 field offices around the state to help veterans access services and benefits. In addition to helping veterans with health-related issues, the VSD helps veterans access programs that provide employment, business, housing, family support and treatment services.

Secretary Hale described the VSD's top three priorities as:

(1) PTSD and traumatic brain injury (TBI) — the VSD recommends more research, treatment options and long-term planning among government agencies and providers;

(2) a comprehensive state cemetery plan — the VSD has developed a map of sites that would provide burial locations within 75 miles of most veterans and their families; and

(3) homeless veterans — the VSD recommends that the committee receive a comprehensive update on the issue during the interim from state and local agencies.

On questioning, Secretary Hale and committee members addressed the following concerns and topics.

Unemployment benefits. Most veterans qualify for unemployment benefits after they are released from active duty. The Workforce Solutions Department has a regional director who specializes in veterans' unemployment issues.

Homelessness. Veterans must produce either a DD214 form or a social security number and service number to qualify for homeless veteran services. The VSD has not been able to ascertain how many homeless veterans are Native American, though the department does train Native American counselors in tribal communities to help veterans access benefits.

VA benefits and services. Approximately 50,000 service members will be released from active duty annually in the next several years and become eligible to enter the VA system; long-term planning is needed to address this influx. Planning is also needed to address the increased need for PTSD and TBI services and to ensure that services provided through county hospitals and clinics are coordinated with the VA. The VA is reluctant to have local hospitals provide veterans' services because local staff may not understand veterans' issues.

Cemeteries. The VSD is looking into whether capital outlay funds may be used as the 10 percent state match required for federal cemetery funding. Cemetery operations costs are the state's responsibility, and the federal government would like the states to take over the cemeteries entirely. The national cemetery in Santa Fe is projected to be full sometime between 2025 and 2035. Burial in the cemeteries is free for veterans and their spouses.

College credits and scholarships. Each higher education institution has its own policy on whether college credits will be granted for skills gained in the military. Some disabled veterans cannot meet the statutory requirement of six credit hours per semester for veteran scholarships.

- ★ Secretary Hale will provide the committee with information on the potential increase in the number of patients who will enter the VA health care system due to implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, or "Obamacare".
- ★ Secretary Hale will investigate the letter recently sent by the VA informing veterans that payments must now be made by electronic direct deposit to a bank account and will no longer be made in cash. He will also follow up with Representative Jeff on the issue.
- ★ Representative Martinez will provide Secretary Hale with information on the June 12, 2013 meeting with the Property Control Division of the General Services Department and the VA regarding the Fort Bayard cemetery project in progress.

Veteran Employment Tax Credit Status Update

John C. Tysseling, Ph.D., chief economist, Taxation and Revenue Department (TRD), and Alan Martinez, deputy secretary, VSD, gave a presentation on credits against income and corporate income taxes that are available to employers that hire veterans. Though the credits were enacted in the 2012 legislative session and applicable during the 2012 taxable year, only three claims for the credit have been filed to date.

On questioning, the presenters noted that the TRD conducted a "media blast" and posted information on its web site when the credits were enacted. The claims process is not difficult and

only requires that employers identify employees as veterans. Some employers may not be claiming the credit because they were not liable for taxes in 2012 due to the economic downturn. The veteran employment tax credit is not directly related to the state's job training program (JTP), and an employer participating in the JTP may claim the credit.

- ★ Dr. Tysseling will look into developing a system for the TRD to identify veteran-owned businesses.

Office of Military Base Planning and Support Overview

Brigadier General (Ret.) Hanson Scott, director, Office of Military Base Planning and Support, gave an overview of current issues faced by military installations in New Mexico, most notably the effects of federal budget reductions and sequestration. While all installations have had to narrow their focus due to recent federal budget cuts, readiness remains the number-one priority. Military personnel are exempt from sequestration, but furloughs have been imposed on civilian and civil service employees, and 3,100 temporary employees have been terminated. Both the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Army have reduced training and flight hours, and libraries and gymnasiums have been closed on some bases. Certain construction projects will proceed as planned, however, including the housing privatization project at Cannon Air Force Base scheduled to begin in late summer.

Brigadier General Scott described current initiatives at the Office of Military Base Planning and Support. The office's top priority is to support the upcoming transition at Holloman Air Force Base, in which the base's F-22s will be replaced with F-16s over the course of the next year. It is also advocating to move the proposed SunZia renewable energy transmission line outside of the White Sands Missile Range northern extension so that the line does not interfere with military missions in the area. The office continues to monitor the U.S. Department of Defense's proposal for a round of base realignment and closures in 2015, which Congress has not yet approved and which the U.S. House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness openly opposes. The office is participating in the regional joint land use study to address compatibility issues between local governments and military installations in southern New Mexico and west Texas; continuing to address land acquisition adjacent to Cannon Air Force Base; and developing a "military case value statement" of New Mexico's military installations.

On questioning, Brigadier General Scott and committee members addressed the following concerns and topics.

SunZia project. The legislature passed a memorial in 2011 requesting that routes for renewable transmission lines be developed in collaboration with military installations, but that memorial was not specific to the SunZia project and should be reintroduced with SunZia named. The transmission line route has the potential to affect missions from all New Mexico military installations, not just those in the area.

Spaceport America. White Sands Missile Range is supportive of the spaceport and is

willing to cooperatively schedule launch and flight activities at the two facilities. The U.S. Department of Defense may, or may not, see the spaceport as a military advantage when conducting its next round of base closures.

- ★ On a motion by Senator Burt, seconded by Senator Ivey-Soto, the committee unanimously directed Ms. Stokes to draft a letter on behalf of the committee to the U.S. secretary of defense regarding concerns about the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's proposed route for the SunZia renewable energy transmission lines.

Focus Areas and Work Plan

Ms. Stokes presented the committee's proposed work plan for the interim, which includes a total of six meetings to be held in Santa Fe, Albuquerque, Roswell and Alamogordo. The work plan is included in the meeting file. In discussion, committee members:

(1) considered reintroducing a bill from previous sessions that would provide an exemption from income tax for military retirement pay;

(2) requested that Presbyterian Healthcare Services be invited to make a presentation on its veteran and family support services; and

(3) requested that the meeting in Alamogordo at Holloman Air Force Base include discussions of education and housing issues.

On a motion by Senator Martinez, seconded by Senator Burt, the work plan was adopted.

Adjourn

The committee adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

**MINUTES
of the
SECOND MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**July 1, 2013
Daniels Leadership Center, New Mexico Military Institute
Roswell**

The second meeting of the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee was called to order by Representative Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez, co-chair, on July 1, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. in the Daniels Leadership Center at New Mexico Military Institute (NMMI) in Roswell.

Present

Sen. Richard C. Martinez, Co-Chair
Rep. Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez, Co-Chair
Sen. William F. Burt
Rep. Nathan "Nate" Cote
Rep. Bob Wooley

Absent

Rep. Dianne Miller Hamilton
Sen. Daniel A. Ivey-Soto
Sen. William H. Payne

Advisory Members

Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Rep. Thomas A. Anderson
Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Sen. Carlos R. Cisneros
Rep. Yvette Herrell
Sen. John Pinto
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle
Rep. Dennis J. Roch

Rep. George Dodge, Jr.
Sen. Timothy M. Keller
Rep. Edward C. Sandoval
Rep. Jeff Steinborn
Sen. Lisa A. Torracco

Staff

Peter Kovnat, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Kathleen Dexter, Researcher, LCS
John Butrick, Law School Intern, LCS

Guests

The guest list in the meeting file.

Handouts

Copies of all handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file.

Monday, July 1

The meeting began with a moment of silence in memory of firefighters who died in a recent Arizona wildfire.

Welcome to NMMI

Major General Jerry W. Grizzle, Ph.D., superintendent of NMMI, welcomed the committee with some history on the institution and a description of its focus. Founded in 1891, NMMI is the nation's only state-supported four-year military school, and because its curriculum spans both upper high school and junior college, students graduate with 15 to 20 hours of college credit. NMMI has a 14-to-1 student-teacher ratio, with 95 percent of faculty members holding a Ph.D. or master's degree. All coursework is developed around the institute's core principles of academic excellence, leadership excellence and physical excellence. In addition to having the nation's largest service-academy preparation program, NMMI also offers the nation's only full-scholarship program for Native Americans, a program that leads to an associate's degree in criminal justice. Though NMMI's annual expenses per student are approximately \$36,000, tuition is \$11,700, with the difference covered by state funding and donations. Donations from a foundation established by former cadet, World War II pilot and businessman Bill Daniels provided funds to build the Daniels Leadership Center and the Godfrey Athletic Center.

On questioning, General Grizzle and committee members addressed the following topics.

General T. Knowles legislative scholarship. The scholarship program was established in 1989 and funded entirely by NMMI until 2006, at which time the legislature began partially funding the program. (NMMI has requested full funding from the legislature.) Initially, the scholarship covered half of a cadet's tuition; in recent years, however, scholarship awards have been based on whatever funds are available. Approximately 200 students are in the scholarship program each year. If a slot remains unfilled by July 1, NMMI assigns a recruit from another area of the state to that slot. Students in the scholarship program are required to send a thank-you note to their legislative sponsors. A legislator cannot get information on a student's grade point average (GPA) but can find out whether the student is maintaining the minimum required GPA.

Coursework. Because NMMI students are placed in classes based on academic capability rather than age, a 15-year-old might be placed in a college-level course.

Native American scholarship. Application for this scholarship is done through the NMMI web site.

Welcome to Roswell

Mayor Del Journey welcomed the committee to Roswell.

Strategic Plan and Federal Funding for Veterans' Cemeteries in New Mexico

Secretary of Veterans' Services Timothy L. Hale gave a presentation on a Veterans' Services Department (VSD) proposal for new veterans' cemeteries. Because veterans can choose where they are buried, the state's veterans' cemeteries are filling up not only with New Mexico veterans but also with out-of-state veterans. The Santa Fe National Cemetery is projected to be full between 2025 and 2035; the Fort Bayard National Cemetery is not projected to be full soon but is far from the major veteran populations in the state. The VSD proposes to build several cemeteries of three acres or less, placed such that the majority of the state's veterans are within 75 miles of a cemetery — a shift from the past practice of building large, centralized veterans' cemeteries such as the one in Santa Fe. Possible locations for the new cemeteries are rated by the VSD based on how many veterans live within 75 miles; local participation, such as donated land; and tribal participation. Representatives from Carlsbad, Gallup, Roswell, Ruidoso and Taos and various Native American groups have expressed interest in establishing veterans' cemeteries.

If a proposed cemetery is approved by the federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), the state must provide a 10 percent match in order to receive VA funding for construction and must assume all operations costs, though the VSD is interested in shifting operations responsibility to local governments via memoranda of understanding. If the entire VSD plan for new cemeteries were adopted, the state would need to provide approximately \$1.3 million in matching funding. A previous \$3.5 million VA grant for a cemetery in Fort Stanton was returned unused by the previous administration, and during the 2013 legislative session, a joint executive-legislative request for \$650,000 in state funds to match \$6.5 million in VA funds stalled in committee.

On questioning, Secretary Hale and committee members addressed the following topics.

State funding. The required state-match funding would be a one-time appropriation. Though the VSD plan proposes more than 10 new cemeteries, the department would start with only two to four projects. The VA makes its approval decisions in September each year; the state would need to appropriate matching funds from the general fund for any approved cemeteries in the following legislative session. In addition to the state match for building the cemeteries, the VSD needs funding in its budget for one to two full-time employees to administer the cemetery program; further personnel would be provided by local governments.

Santa Fe and Fort Bayard national cemeteries. Because the Santa Fe National Cemetery is landlocked, any noncontiguous land in the area that might become available for a veterans' cemetery would be considered by the VA as a separate cemetery rather than an expansion of the existing one. The upgrade at the Fort Bayard National Cemetery includes 705 new crypts and 350 columbaria. Because of the cemetery's arid location, the VA is responding to the local community's request for xeriscaping rather than the traditional "football field" landscaping.

Burial and reburial benefits. If a veteran is buried in a non-VA cemetery, the family receives a \$300 interment benefit, plus a headstone. If a family wishes to rebury a veteran who was buried elsewhere, the family must bear the cost of disinterment and transport from the

original cemetery. The VA will not charge a burial fee if the original burial was in a non-VA cemetery. The VSD can assist families that have questions on this process.

Out-of-state veterans. The cemeteries most likely to receive burial requests from out-of-state veterans are those located near the state's borders.

Rural cemeteries. The VA introduced the concept of rural cemeteries a few years ago, and New Mexico is the first state to develop a rural cemetery plan. The National Cemetery Administration within the VA reviews state cemetery plans and considers population density when approving those plans; if the plans are approved, federal funding for a cemetery follows within two years. Milan and Roswell have cemetery sites available, though the Roswell community's preference to allow burial of veterans who do not qualify for burial in a VA-certified cemetery would disqualify it from VA approval, funding and periodic maintenance.

Honor guards. The VSD conducts training for honor guards in conjunction with the national guard. Most funeral homes are in contact with the VA and will arrange for an honor guard when burying a veteran in a non-VA cemetery.

Homeless veterans and unclaimed remains. The VSD works with the VA to determine whether homeless veterans and unclaimed remains are eligible for burial in a VA cemetery, and Secretary Hale signs as next of kin if they do.

- ★ Secretary Hale will provide information to Senator Martinez on the number of burials conducted monthly at the Santa Fe National Cemetery, as well as the tribal affiliations of Native Americans buried in the tribal section.

Public Comment

Beverly Allen-Ananins, southeast New Mexico field representative for U.S. Senator Tom Udall, told the committee that Senator Udall serves on the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies. The subcommittee has approved funding for Holloman and Cannon air force bases, and Senator Udall is advocating for making broadband internet service available to all veterans so they can more easily access the VA system.

Access to Health Care — Transportation Options in Southeast New Mexico

Magil Duran and Greg Neal, president and vice president, respectively, of the Southeastern New Mexico Veterans Transportation Network (VTN), gave a presentation on the organization's work transporting area veterans to medical appointments. With six vehicles and a dozen volunteer drivers, the VTN provides free transportation for veterans and their necessary attendants to and from VA medical facilities in Albuquerque, Amarillo, Artesia, Big Springs, Clovis, El Paso, Hobbs and Lubbock. Though the VTN is based in Roswell, it has stationed vans in Hobbs, Carlsbad and Artesia as well. The organization's funding comes entirely from donations, and annual expenses total approximately \$60,000. The VTN needs funding not only

to replace the vans, all of which have more than 100,000 miles, but also to address damage and loss, such as the recent theft of four tires and wheels from one of the vans. Capital outlay funds have been used in the past to purchase vans for use by the VTN.

On questioning, the presenters and committee members addressed the following topics.

Nonprofit status. The VTN has applied for 501(c)(3) status. While the application is pending, the VTN operates under the American Legion.

Eligibility. Honorably discharged veterans are eligible for VTN transportation and must show their VA appointment postcard as verification.

Drivers and insurance. The VTN carries a \$1 million liability insurance policy, and drivers may not drive VTN vans unless they are approved by the insurance company. Drivers must also adhere to the VTN's published policies and procedures.

Outreach. Veterans find out about VTN services through word-of-mouth referrals, news articles and radio coverage.

VA Health Care in Southeast New Mexico

Sonja Brown, chief, VA Voluntary Service and Public Affairs Operations, gave a presentation on VA health care services in southeast New Mexico. In addition to receiving primary and mental health care services at the VA community-based outpatient clinic in Artesia, veterans are eligible to receive "fee care" at non-VA health facilities in certain circumstances, such as when travel to a VA facility could be so deleterious as to negate the benefits of the service provided at the VA facility. Like the VTN, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) organization provides free transportation for veterans and uses volunteer drivers; unlike the VTN, the DAV only transports veterans to medical facilities within the VA service area, which excludes facilities in Hobbs and Carlsbad and in Texas. Also unlike the VTN, DAV drivers are required to receive training and to pass a physical certification.

The VA also offers case management for frail and homebound veterans, home-based primary care, telehealth services, hospice care, urgent care and emergency care, though veterans experiencing a life-threatening emergency are authorized to seek care at the nearest facility regardless of VA affiliation. Dental and vision care services are available for certain eligible veterans.

On questioning, Ms. Brown and committee members addressed the following topics.

Transportation. The VA provides free transportation to veterans in other rural areas, including Durango, Colorado. The DAV does not have wheelchair-accessible vans; veterans in wheelchairs must provide their own transportation unless another organization, such as the VTN, can transport them.

Reimbursement. A physician must document a medical need in order for a veteran's non-VA health care expenses to be reimbursed by the VA. A veteran may receive health care at any VA facility; however, the VA will only reimburse for travel to a VA facility within the VA district in which the veteran resides.

- ★ Representative Cote requested a presentation at a future committee meeting on VA benefits and billing, including information on recent changes in the system.
- ★ Ms. Brown will provide information regarding whether shingles vaccines can be dispensed at VA community-based outpatient clinics.

Higher Education for Veterans and Active Duty Personnel

Lieutenant Commander Marilyn M. Dykman, M.A., United States Coast Guard (retired), director, University of New Mexico (UNM) Veterans Resource Center (VRC), and Branden Trujillo, director, State Approving Agency, Higher Education Department, gave a presentation on VRCs at post-secondary institutions. The centers provide not only academic and employment counseling for veterans to help them stay in school and graduate, but they also provide referrals for services such as mental health counseling, if necessary. At only \$14.00 per certified veteran student, U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) funding for the centers is not sufficient for some small post-secondary institutions to establish centers and adequately train personnel. The DOD recently made VRC funding contingent on student data tracking; the UNM VRC has relied on unpaid AmeriCorps volunteers for data tracking, but their terms of service will end in October. Commander Dykman's five-year draft budget for a fully staffed VRC averages approximately \$500,000 per year.

Not all post-secondary institutions in the state have VRCs. New Mexico State University (NMSU), which provides veteran housing at its main campus and has 500 military veteran students enrolled, does not have a center. Neither does Central New Mexico Community College (CNM), though CNM has a consortium with UNM and class credits transfer between the institutions. Veterans at Santa Fe Community College are in the process of establishing a center, and San Juan College, with a total student body of only 175, has a center. UNM-Taos does not have a center but has received a \$1 million Veterans Upward Bound grant that it will use to help military veteran students over the next five years. Another program to help veterans — the Veterans Retraining Assistance Program, which covers technical training — is available only to veterans who are enrolled full time and have depleted both their academic and their unemployment benefits.

On questioning, Commander Dykman and committee members addressed the following topics.

GI Bill and other benefits. VRCs advise students on all available benefits, including GI Bill benefits under Chapters 30, 31, 33, 35, 1606 and 1607. The UNM VRC is migrating to an online system to streamline the benefits certification process.

VRC funding. Ideally, a VRC would receive \$25,000 to \$30,000 in start-up funding; however, some centers, such as the one at NMSU-Alamogordo, receive \$5,000 or less and are seriously understaffed.

Student data tracking. VRCs need full-time staff to meet the VA's schedule for tracking and reporting student data. If a VRC does not meet a veteran student certification deadline, the VA will place a debt against that student.

VetSuccess Program. The VetSuccess Program at UNM provides job placement assistance to all veterans, not just student veterans, and works in partnership with the Workforce Solutions Department and the UNM Career Services Office.

In discussion, a legislator expressed concern over the use of the term "sustainable" in the VRC handout and mentioned its use in the United Nations Agenda 21.

Public Comment

Mayor Journey expressed his concerns about VA health care services in rural areas and urged the committee to seriously address the issue.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Senator Martinez, seconded by Senator Burt, the minutes from the committee's June 6, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved.

SunZia Transmission Line

Mr. Kovnat presented a draft letter to U.S. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel regarding concerns over the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's preferred route for the SunZia transmission line. On a motion by Senator Burt, seconded by Representative Wooley, the letter was unanimously approved, with direction to send copies to the Otero County Commission.

Tour of NMMI

Chief Warrant Officer Three Carl Hansen took committee members on a tour of NMMI facilities.

The committee adjourned at 3:10 p.m.

**MINUTES
of the
THIRD MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**August 7, 2013
St. Joseph Community Health
1516 5th Street NW
Albuquerque**

The third meeting of the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee, which was held as a joint meeting with the Mortgage Finance Authority (MFA) Act Oversight Committee, was called to order by Representative Ernest H. Chavez, chair, MFA Act Oversight Committee, on August 7, 2013 at 9:10 a.m. at the St. Joseph Community Health (SJCH) facility in Albuquerque.

Present

Sen. Richard C. Martinez, Co-Chair
Rep. Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez,
Co-Chair
Rep. Thomas A. Anderson (voting member
for this meeting)
Rep. Nathan "Nate" Cote
Rep. Bob Wooley

Absent

Sen. William F. Burt
Rep. Dianne Miller Hamilton
Sen. Daniel A. Ivey-Soto
Sen. William H. Payne

Advisory Members

Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Sen. Carlos R. Cisneros
Rep. George Dodge, Jr.
Rep. Edward C. Sandoval
Rep. Jeff Steinborn

Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Rep. Yvette Herrell
Sen. Timothy M. Keller
Sen. John Pinto
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle
Rep. Dennis J. Roch
Sen. Lisa A. Torraco

Staff

Peter Kovnat, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Kathleen Dexter, Researcher, LCS
Jennifer Dana, Intern, LCS

Guests

The guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Copies of all handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file.

Wednesday, August 7

Welcome

Allen Sanchez, president and chief executive officer of SJCH, welcomed the committees to SJCH's new facility, which will be dedicated on September 7, 2013 during a celebratory matanza. He described the organization's advocacy programs for children from birth to age five and noted that SJCH runs the largest family home visiting program in the country.

Homeless Veterans and the Housing First Model

Joseph Montoya, deputy director of programs, New Mexico MFA; Hank Hughes, executive director, New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness; Doug Chaplin, manager, Community Development Division, City of Albuquerque; Dennis Plummer, executive director, Metropolitan Homelessness Project; and Nicole Martinez, executive director, Mesilla Valley Community of Hope, gave a presentation on programs in New Mexico that use the Housing First model to address homelessness. Two such programs are the Heading Home program in Albuquerque, for which early data show a decrease in jail, hospital, shelter and medical costs for the population served; and the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope, a tent city in Las Cruces that is run in large part by its residents and that focuses on rapid re-housing.

A January 2013 one-day count of the state's homeless population, conducted per U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines, showed that more than 2,800 people in New Mexico were homeless, of whom more than 400 were "unsheltered" — living outside, in cars or in other unprotected situations. More than 25 percent of the homeless identified were under age 18. This HUD count shows a decrease in the homeless population since 2005, when the population exceeded 5,000; however, numbers produced under the HUD definition of "homeless" are significantly lower than those produced under the Public Education Department (PED) definition, which includes children in unstable housing situations, such as living in motels or "doubling up" with friends or family. Under its definition, the PED identified more than 12,500 homeless children during the 2011-2012 school year.

The federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) provides three programs to assist homeless veterans. The VA Supportive Housing (VASH) program provides housing vouchers and supportive services to disabled veterans; the Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) program provides rapid re-housing for veterans who need short-term assistance; and the Grant and Per Diem program provides transitional housing. The HUD reports a 17 percent decrease in veteran homelessness since 2009, and the federal government has steadily increased funding for both the VASH and SSVF programs in an effort to eliminate veteran homelessness by 2015. The VA recently granted \$1.9 million to New Mexico programs for the homeless, run by Goodwill Industries, the New Mexico Veterans Integration Center (NMVIC) and the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope.

On questioning, the presenters and committee members addressed the following topics.

Tax incentives. New Mexico provides tax incentives for building affordable housing but not for rent, which is addressed with federal housing vouchers.

Funding. The New Mexico Coalition to End Homelessness, the Metropolitan Homelessness Project and the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope are private organizations funded through donations and grants. The VASH program is entirely federally funded, and the funds go to local housing authorities; the Heading Home program is run with both local and federal funds and is looking at a funding collaboration with jail diversion programs. The MFA receives minimal state funding for homeless programs. Homeless programs are limited by both a shortage of program funds and a shortage of affordable housing in the state, especially on tribal lands. Funding for local housing authorities has decreased 50 percent in the last five years, and no funds may be used for maintenance. One possible funding stream for homeless veteran programs would be to impose a use fee for locations used by veterans during commemorative events, such as the Memorial Day event at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Angel Fire.

Homeless count and definitions. The January one-day homeless population count is conducted statewide, both as a day-of head count and as a survey over the course of the following week at locations that provide services to the homeless, such as soup kitchens. Homeless counts tend to be higher in the summer than in the winter. If a homeless person stays for a night with a friend, the person is still considered homeless by the HUD and eligible for services. The VA definition for "homeless" includes anyone without a permanent residence. Veterans typically account for 15 percent of the homeless population, and the working homeless account for 80 percent. Homeless people who request services are asked if they are veterans and, if so, directed toward veteran benefits. The decrease in the homeless population since 2005 shown in HUD statistics reflects a decrease in the homeless population living outside and in the disabled homeless, but not in the overall homeless population as measured under broader definitions of homelessness. People who are homeless tend to stay as close to "home" as possible, but some in rural areas migrate to urban areas to receive services.

Housing. A person in subsidized housing must pay 30 percent of his or her income for rent. Affordable housing rents are based on fair market rents in the area and are targeted at 50 percent of the area median income. Surplus equipment currently coming to New Mexico law enforcement agencies from the federal Department of Homeland Security might be distributed to homeless programs as well. The Mesilla Valley Community of Hope has support from the community for its request to rezone city property for a permanent tent city; however, some businesses in the immediate area are concerned about having a homeless population nearby, and the organization is looking into building a fence to address the concerns.

Homeless children. New Mexico has one of the highest populations of homeless children in the country. The Cuidando los Ninos program in Albuquerque ensures that homeless children go to school while their parents are looking for work. School liaisons in Las Cruces meet monthly with area schools to assist homeless children. Title I funding for homeless children is available to all school districts in the state.

Minimum wage. Though there is a great deal of research on the effects of raising the minimum wage, there has been no research on its effect on homelessness.

Speaking from the audience on invitation of the chair, Secretary of Veterans' Services Timothy L. Hale noted that the Veterans' Services Department (VSD) provides funding for the NMVIC and the Mesilla Valley Community of Hope.

- ★ Senator Cisneros suggested that the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee consider legislation to provide guaranteed state matching funds for federally funded homeless veteran programs that require a state match.
- ★ Mr. Montoya will provide information to Representative Sandra D. Jeff, an advisory member of the MFA Act Oversight Committee, on:
 - (1) how many homeless Native Americans migrate to the Albuquerque area; and
 - (2) funding sources for VSD programs serving homeless urban Native Americans.

New Mexico Veterans Integration Center

Elinor Reiners and Fermin Ortega, NMVIC program director and operations manager, respectively, gave an overview of programs for single veterans who are either homeless or experiencing a housing crisis. The NMVIC provides transitional housing for up to two years while a veteran transitions into a stable income and housing situation, and the program has seen a 70 percent success rate thus far. Conditions for admission into the program include, among other requirements, an honorable discharge, sobriety for at least 28 days prior to admission and a clean drug screen. NMVIC services include case management, food baskets, transportation, clothing and training in daily living skills such as job seeking and budgeting. Veterans who receive services are required to perform community service. The NMVIC currently houses 50 veterans and plans to expand to 200, preferably on a dual campus that can serve both single veterans and veterans with families. The organization hosts an annual Stand Down event in Albuquerque to make homeless veterans aware of available benefits and services; in part because of the turnout at this event, the NMVIC projects there will be at least 200 additional veterans needing services in the next few years.

On questioning, the presenters and committee members addressed the following topics.

Other veteran housing. Henderson House, which is in Albuquerque and run by the YWCA, provides transitional housing for female veterans and their families. NewLife Homes is refurbishing the Sundowner Motel site in Albuquerque as affordable housing available to all, including veterans. The NMVIC currently operates in Albuquerque but, depending on available funding, has plans to expand to other areas of the state. Care 66 runs a similar program for veterans in the Gallup area, and a group in Espanola is working to establish a program.

Requirements. The NMVIC waives the requirement for an honorable discharge for certain minor infractions on a case-by-case basis. Veterans with alcohol or drug issues need not have graduated from a substance abuse program prior to admission; however, if a veteran resumes using alcohol or drugs while at the NMVIC, the veteran will be referred to the Metropolitan Assessment and Treatment Services program or Turquoise Lodge. The requirement for proof of insurance, registration and licensure is specific to owning and operating a vehicle. Pets are not allowed, but assistance animals are welcome. Residents are not allowed in each other's rooms but may take three-day passes to stay off-site together.

Benefits and services. Veterans with service-connected disabilities qualify for VA benefits regardless of their length of service. If a veteran does not qualify for VA benefits, the NMVIC will help the veteran access other services, including Medicaid and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. The Workforce Solutions Department conducts training classes twice weekly at the NMVIC to help veterans who are seeking employment. Veterans with families cannot enroll in the NMVIC program but are eligible for emergency services, and the NMVIC will try to get them into other facilities such as Henderson House. Veterans who leave the NMVIC facility are eligible for furniture donations.

Speaking from the audience on invitation of the chair, Deputy Secretary of Veterans' Services Alan Martinez described several VSD programs to assist veterans, including the transitional assistance, job search and Yellow Ribbon programs. The department's 19 offices statewide conduct outreach to make veterans aware of available benefits and services, an effort that will be aided by a new tracking program that will soon be operational. Deputy Secretary Martinez also noted that National Guard members are recognized as veterans in New Mexico.

Approval of Minutes

Representative Anderson was appointed to serve as a voting member of the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee in lieu of Representative Hamilton for purposes of this meeting. On a motion by Senator Martinez, seconded by Representative Anderson, the minutes from the committee's July 1, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved.

Goodwill Industries of New Mexico SSVF Program

Mary Martinez Carter and Jim Cochran, SSVF case manager and program manager, respectively, gave a presentation on the SSVF program sponsored by Goodwill Industries of New Mexico. The program provides case management and temporary financial assistance to veterans and their families, with "families" consisting of whomever the veteran designates. Eligibility requirements include a discharge other than dishonorable, income below 50 percent of the area median income and homelessness, impending homelessness or inappropriate housing. In October, the program will expand from its current seven counties into 26 counties, and it expects to serve 650 veteran households annually. Aside from additional funding to meet the growing need for services, the greatest needs in the program are: 1) more transitional housing facilities; and 2) a funding stream, or a waiver of the obligation, for licensing and testing fees for veterans seeking employment.

On questioning, the presenters and committee members addressed the following topics.

Benefits. Temporary financial assistance benefits are limited to one security deposit. Federal funding for SSVF programs can be used only for housing; however, SSVF temporary financial assistance qualifies under the "but for this assistance, the veteran would be homeless" standard. If a veteran is in a rehabilitation facility, the family is not eligible for SSVF, but the program will help the family get services through other programs. If a veteran dies while enrolled in the program, the veteran's family will continue to receive SSVF services for up to a year following the veteran's death. SSVF services include legal aid through the Veterans Justice Outreach program at the VA, and the state bar association provides free legal advice for veterans. Counseling services are not provided through SSVF but are available through the VA.

Speaking from the audience on invitation of the chair, Deputy Secretary Martinez explained the statutory provision, signed into law in 2013, that provides for expedited professional licensure for military service members and their spouses and for veterans.

- ★ Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee staff will research federal programs for homeless veterans, how much funding the programs receive and how much the state can afford in supplemental funding to expand the programs to all counties.

United South Broadway Corporation (USBC): Homeless Prevention Program

Deborah Norman, USBC outreach coordinator, outlined the USBC's efforts to prevent homelessness through foreclosure counseling and defense. Active-duty service members qualify for certain protections under the federal Servicemembers Civil Relief Act, and veterans have access to the same general plans offered by lenders to other homeowners, including special forbearance, mortgage modification, partial or advance claims, principal reduction and the Federal Housing Administration Home Affordable Modification Program. While the USBC has been very successful in helping homeowners, including veterans, avoid foreclosure by counseling them about their rights and available options, there are increasing numbers of people facing foreclosure who do not meet the income requirements for the available programs.

On questioning, Ms. Norman noted that foreclosure totals in her handout include foreclosures on modular homes.

- ★ Ms. Norman will provide information on how a veteran can qualify for more than one homeless prevention program and how the programs work together.

New Mexico VA Health Care System: Benefits, Eligibility and Billing

Bill Etchison and Kara L. Catton, chief of health administration services and executive assistant to the director, respectively, New Mexico VA Health Care System, gave an overview of VA health care services in the state. The VA hospital in Albuquerque and its 13 community-based outpatient clinics (CBOCs) in New Mexico and southern Colorado provide inpatient,

outpatient, mental health and non-institutional care, such as respite and hospice services. The VA also provides mileage reimbursements and transportation assistance to certain qualifying veterans. Eligibility requirements for VA services include a discharge other than dishonorable and 24 continuous months of duty, or the full period for which the veteran was called for active duty. On enrollment with the VA, a veteran is assigned to one of eight priority groups based on the veteran's disability level, income and time of service. The VA will pay for health services that a veteran receives from non-VA facilities in certain circumstances, including emergencies.

On questioning, the presenters and committee members addressed the following topics.

Benefits and pensions. The VA hospital conducts benefits and pensions exams on behalf of the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), which administers the benefits and pensions. It currently takes about a year to complete the VBA certification process for a service-connected disability. A veteran who cannot access a VA office to file a VBA claim can get help from private veterans' organizations such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Copays and mileage reimbursements. Copays and mileage reimbursement amounts vary by priority group.

VA physicians, facilities and services. If a physician in the VA system moves to a different facility, that physician's patients have the option of continuing with the physician in the new location or staying at the original clinic. The VA is expanding and updating its CBOCs to serve more patients locally. Calls to the CBOCs are currently routed to a centralized call center, but this practice is under review following many complaints. The VA has no age limit on provision of services.

Non-VA facilities and services. If a non-VA facility is reimbursed by the VA for services provided to a veteran, the facility is prohibited from billing the veteran for any difference between the reimbursement amount and the amount the facility would have charged for those services. A veteran enrolled in TRICARE insurance is not limited to the VA health care system and can receive treatment at any facility that accepts TRICARE.

Federal health care reform. Veterans enrolled in the VA will not be assessed a penalty for lack of health coverage under the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

- ★ Mr. Etchison will address VA services issues with Representatives Steinborn, Cote and Anderson and with their constituents. He will also provide a map and flow chart of where a veteran receives VA services based on where the veteran lives and the services necessary.

Presbyterian Medical Services (PMS) Veteran and Family Support Services

Cheri Nipp, PMS central region director, and Hoyt Roberson, PMS veteran services training coordinator, gave a presentation on PMS's Veteran and Family Support Services (VFSS)

program. The program provides outpatient case management, behavioral health and psychiatric services to veterans, defined as anyone who has served in the military for as little as one day, regardless of discharge status, and their family members, defined as anyone with a primary relationship to the veteran and who is affected by the veteran's military service. VFSS services are available at all PMS primary sites in the state, with the main office in Rio Rancho. Since its inception in 2007, the program has served 1,600 clients — 60 percent for behavioral health services and 35 percent for case management services.

On questioning, the presenters clarified that family members qualify for alcohol and substance abuse services; there is no age restriction for services so long as the client's issue is related to the veteran's service; and there is no time frame for applying for posttraumatic stress disorder services.

Fort Bayard

Tennessee Webb, principal and director, and Teresa Santiago, president and chief executive officer, both of GEP Corporation, gave a presentation on their corporation's interest in developing the Fort Bayard medical facility into a public-private master-planned community for veterans. GEP Corporation is currently conducting a feasibility study for the project. Mr. Webb requested that his written statement be entered into the record and is included in the meeting file.

On questioning, the presenters and committee members addressed the following topics.

Profits. The profit margin would be low for GEP Corporation investors because they want to help American veterans. The primary focus will be on the veteran community, though GEP Corporation will also consider other projects for the site.

Old hospital. All services provided at Fort Bayard have been moved to the new hospital, and the legislature appropriated \$4.3 million to demolish the old hospital. GEP Corporation would prefer to reinvent the old hospital and add sustainable technology.

Public Comment

Daniel Stoddard reported to the committees on the work of New Mexico Veterans' Hope Inn, a nonprofit organization that provides services and housing for homeless, at-risk, elderly and disabled veterans in southeast New Mexico, including at its Los Amigos Reintegration Center in Santa Rosa.

Adjourn

The committees adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

**MINUTES
of the
FOURTH MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**September 3, 2013
New Mexico National Guard Headquarters
Santa Fe County**

The fourth meeting of the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee (MVAC) was called to order by Senator Richard C. Martinez, co-chair, on September 3, 2013 at 9:30 a.m. at the New Mexico National Guard Headquarters in Santa Fe County.

Present

Sen. Richard C. Martinez, Co-Chair
Rep. Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez,
Co-Chair
Sen. William F. Burt
Rep. Nathan "Nate" Cote
Rep. Dianne Miller Hamilton
Sen. William H. Payne

Absent

Sen. Daniel A. Ivey-Soto
Rep. Bob Wooley

Advisory Members

Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Rep. Thomas A. Anderson
Sen. Carlos R. Cisneros
Rep. Yvette Herrell
Sen. John Pinto

Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Rep. George Dodge, Jr.
Sen. Timothy M. Keller
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle
Rep. Dennis J. Roch
Rep. Edward C. Sandoval
Rep. Jeff Steinborn
Sen. Lisa A. Torracco

Staff

Peter Kovnat, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Kathleen Dexter, Researcher, LCS
Jennifer Dana, Intern, LCS

Guests

The guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Copies of all handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file.

Tuesday, September 3

Welcome and Update on the National Guard and Its Programs

Brigadier General Andrew E. Salas, adjutant general, New Mexico National Guard (Guard), welcomed the committee to the Guard Headquarters and gave a presentation on the Guard's programs. General Salas described New Mexico as a "unique military treasure"; the state's minimally populated rural areas provide valuable training grounds and air corridors, and the Guard would like to expand its use of these areas. It would also like to establish a presence at Cannon and Kirtland Air Force bases, in part to make those installations "BRAC-proof" — protected from the federal base realignment and closure process. Because the Guard already has members who are F-16 pilots and trainers, it is negotiating with Holloman Air Force Base to assist in the base's F-16 program. It would also like to participate in training at White Sands Missile Range.

In its national defense role, the Guard has deployed more than 4,500 soldiers and airmen/women to 18 countries around the world since 2001. It has also participated since 2006 in the State Partnership program, which pairs state national guard units with countries in need of assistance with emergency management, disaster response and other nonlethal and peacekeeping operations. The Guard's partner in this program is Costa Rica. In its role protecting the lives and property of New Mexico residents, the Guard participates in emergency response situations, such as wildfires, and it hosts the New Mexico Counter Drug program, which treats abuse of both legal and illegal drugs as a national security threat.

The Guard's work toward building strong soldiers and communities centers on organizations such as the State Defense Force, comprising 100 volunteers statewide, and the New Mexico Civil Air Patrol, with 1,000 volunteers in 23 squadrons statewide. It emphasizes education; provides family support before, during and after deployment; assists returning Guard members as they transition into civilian employment; trains Guard members in sexual harassment and assault response and prevention; provides honor guards at veterans' funerals; and hosts the New Mexico Youth ChalleNGe in Roswell, a residential and mentorship program for high school dropouts. The Guard recently completed construction of an Army aviation support facility in Santa Fe, where Black Hawk helicopters are based, and a readiness center in Farmington. Plans are under way for readiness centers in Alamogordo and Las Cruces.

The Guard's \$7.092 million budget request for fiscal year (FY) 2015 is approximately \$250,000 higher than what it received from the state in FY 2014. The additional funds will cover increased state employee health insurance premiums, expansion of the New Mexico Civil Air Patrol enrichment program in middle schools and restoration of funding for the New Mexico Youth ChalleNGe program. The Guard will also request \$1.2 million in capital outlay funding for the statewide readiness center and design of the Las Cruces readiness center.

On questioning, General Salas and committee members addressed the following topics.

Suicides. The current suicide rate nationwide is 22 veterans and one active service member per day. Guard members are trained to recognize suicidal distress in themselves and others and to intervene and seek help.

Recruitment and staffing. Recruitment in general is not a problem for the Guard, though recruitment for the pilot corps is difficult due to a lack of necessary experience. The Southwest Aeronautics, Mathematics and Science Academy in Albuquerque is a possible recruitment venue. At the national level, headquarters-level billets are being reduced by up to 25 percent.

State Defense Force. New Mexico's militia — now the State Defense Force — was founded in 1598 and is the oldest in the nation. While there is no formal recruitment for the State Defense Force, the Guard is hoping to increase its ranks.

Educational assistance. Educational assistance is provided only to Guard members.

New Mexico Civil Air Patrol. The Guard has oversight of the New Mexico Civil Air Patrol, but only at the headquarters level.

Drones. The Guard was invited to participate in a drone-based border security program; General Salas declined, though he feels a drone program would be a valid mission for the Guard and good for the state. The Guard will, instead, participate in Holloman Air Force Base's F-16 program.

Grants armory. The Guard has not yet made a final decision on the disposition of the vacant armory in Grants. The Cibola County Sheriff's Office is interested in using the space.

Speaking from the audience on invitation of the chair, Colonel Timothy Paul, Guard chief of staff, stated that the mission for the Lakota helicopters stationed in Las Cruces is reconnaissance-based security and intelligence. Gathered information is shared with law enforcement agencies and the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Department. The helicopters are not deployable to combat environments but are deployable to permissible environments, such as Kosovo. Texas has requested that the Guard provide helicopters and crews to run a border security program.

Speaking from the audience on invitation of the chair, Alan Martinez, deputy secretary for veterans' services, stated that while it is not mandatory that unclaimed veterans' remains be buried in the Santa Fe National Cemetery, they are most often buried there rather than at the state's other veteran cemeteries because the Veterans' Services Department (VSD), which is based in Santa Fe, is the official next of kin for these burials.

- ★ General Salas will provide information to Senator Burt on possible impacts of the federal sequestration on the Civil Air Patrol.

Freedom to Choose Campaign

David R. Schmidt, lobbyist; Jessica Gelay, policy coordinator, Drug Policy Alliance; Augustine Stanley, Army veteran; Anetra Stanley, advocate; Nat Dean, advocate; and Len Goodman, executive director, New MexiCann, gave a presentation on the Freedom to Choose campaign to improve veterans' access to medical marijuana treatment. Many veterans of current and previous military conflicts have been diagnosed with posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which was added in 2009 to the list of qualifying conditions for enrollment in the Department of Health (DOH) medical marijuana program. The federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) — the primary health care provider for veterans — does not participate in the program, however, because cannabis is listed as a Schedule I controlled substance under federal law. Nearly 40 percent of participants in the DOH program are veterans, all of whom had to seek care outside of the VA system in order to enroll in the program. Once a veteran is enrolled and undergoing medical marijuana treatment, the veteran may face employment discrimination; employers can fire an employee who tests positive for marijuana even if the employee is enrolled in the DOH medical marijuana program. The Drug Policy Alliance has launched the Freedom to Choose campaign to make the public and lawmakers aware of the problems that exist for program participants, many of whom are only using medical marijuana because they have had no success with, or a negative reaction to, traditional medical PTSD treatments. The alliance will also hold a forum in the fall for veterans and their families to address issues that veterans face.

On questioning, the presenters and committee members addressed the following topics.

Medical marijuana production. Annual licensing fees for a medical marijuana production license are \$10,000 in the first year, \$20,000 in the second year and \$30,000 per year thereafter. The fees are used to run the program. Production of medical marijuana is tightly regulated in New Mexico, and there has been no federal intervention to date. There are currently 23 licensed producers, each limited to 150 plants. The DOH recently held hearings on how to meet increased demand for medical marijuana due to increased enrollment in the program — whether to increase the number of production licenses or to increase the number of plants each producer can grow. New MexiCann has 16 employees and harvests approximately 250 pounds of marijuana annually; gross receipts in 2013 are projected to be \$1.5 million. New MexiCann regularly sells out within two days of each weekly harvest and turns down up to 275 requests each week.

Types and forms of medical marijuana. Producers grow two types of medical marijuana: marijuana with tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), which will "get you high", and marijuana with cannabidiol (CBD), which will not. Producers recommend one or the other type based on each participant's description of symptoms. The marijuana is available in many forms, including edibles and tinctures. Each strain of medical marijuana is lab-tested, and each final package is labeled for the percentage of THC or CBD and the number of doses.

Drug Policy Alliance. Founded in the 1990s, the alliance is a Santa Fe-based nonprofit that works to change the focus of addiction treatment from a criminal justice model to a medical model.

Federal Department of Justice (DOJ) memo. One interpretation of the recent DOJ memo on marijuana is that where states have laws that legalize marijuana in some form, those laws hold; where states do not have laws, federal laws hold.

Employee drug tests. Bernalillo County employees are not allowed to take any sort of medication on the job that will affect their job performance. Medication taken off the job must be by prescription.

Program eligibility and cost. Doctors do not "prescribe" medical marijuana; they evaluate patients and recommend to the DOH that a patient enroll in the program if the patient meets one of the qualifying conditions. Medical marijuana is not covered by insurance policies or Medicaid; the participant pays for the marijuana, which can cost more than \$350 per ounce. Some producers discount their product for certain participants, including veterans.

Program perceptions. Medical marijuana is perceived by some as a drug being used for recreation under the guise of medicine. A psychiatrist recently filed a petition to remove PTSD from the list of qualifying conditions based on the psychiatrist's assessment that medical marijuana is not an effective treatment for the disorder. After considering the petition, the New Mexico Medical Board decided to keep PTSD on the list.

VA policy. The VA allows veterans who participate in state-run medical marijuana programs to receive health services through the VA, but only for other treatments.

Veterans Procurement Preference

Lawrence Maxwell, state purchasing agent and director, Purchasing Division (PD), General Services Department, and Paul Kippert, Information Technology Procurement Bureau, PD, gave a presentation on challenges posed by the state's procurement preference for resident veteran-owned businesses. The preference, which became effective in January 2013, gives preferences ranging from seven percent to 10 percent, depending on a qualifying business's annual revenue. Businesses must apply for the preference through the Taxation and Revenue Department (TRD), which issues three-year certificates that must be presented to the PD during any bid process.

The PD is having implementation problems because certain issues are not addressed in the statute that created and governs the preference. The statute does not address whether: 1) a business that qualifies for the preference based on its annual revenue at the beginning of the three-year certification period still qualifies if its annual revenue changes within that period; 2) a joint bid submitted by a combination of businesses qualifies for the preference even though only one of the businesses is a resident veteran-owned business; 3) a resident veteran-owned business that is awarded a state contract may subcontract the work to a nonqualifying business; or 4) if a

contract award is protested, a project should proceed while the protest is in progress or should be halted until the protest is resolved.

On questioning, the presenters and committee members addressed the following topics.

Value of the preference. The preference helps veterans who exit the military and start new businesses.

Three-year certification. A business may apply for the preference on the TRD web site, and certification is based on a business's declaration in January of its revenue for the previous year. The TRD does not feel it is authorized to review a business's ongoing eligibility within the three-year certification period.

Protests. If a project is halted while a protest is resolved, the contractor may be harmed because prices for materials may increase beyond what was contained in the original bid. Initial protests are filed with the TRD; appeals to TRD decisions are heard by the district court.

Statute versus rules changes. Problems with the preference need to be addressed in statute because any rules changes that the PD might make to address the problem would not apply to local government bodies.

Roxanne Rivera-Wiest, president, New Mexico Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc.; Mike Puelle, director of public policy and government relations, Associated General Contractors-New Mexico Branch; and Archie Garcia, executive director, Veterans Procurement Assistance Center, spoke from the audience on invitation of the chair regarding the following issues:

- (1) the preference is so generous and margins in the construction industry so tight that all state contracts could potentially go to resident veteran-owned businesses;
- (2) the statutory language focuses on whether a business is owned by a veteran, but the jobs may not be held by veterans; and
- (3) some businesses have shifted their ownership structures to move a veteran into the ownership position in order to qualify for the preference.

- ★ Deputy Secretary Martinez will reconvene a former working group consisting of representatives from the TRD, PD and Construction Industries Division of the Regulation and Licensing Department to review the veterans' procurement preference and make recommendations to the committee at its final meeting on how the statute could be revised.

Service Member Child Custody Act

Deputy Secretary Martinez and Amanda Pagan, attorney and principal, New Mexico Family Law, P.C., and chief warrant officer two, U.S. Army, gave a presentation on the Service Member Child Custody Act, which has been introduced but not passed in the last three legislative

sessions. The act provides protections for service members whose deployments separate them from their children by facilitating communication between the service-member parent and his or her children; prohibiting the at-home parent from filing for sole custody while the service-member parent is deployed; and eliminating custody jurisdiction conflicts. The measure is supported by First Lady Michelle Obama and Dr. Jill Biden, and similar measures have been enacted in 47 states.

On questioning, the presenters and committee members clarified that the bill passed the house but later died for lack of a vote, either in committee or on the senate floor, each time it was introduced. The bill will be presented at the committee's final meeting for possible endorsement again.

Business Outreach to Veterans

Colonel Joseph C. Long, director, Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC), gave a presentation on a program to help prepare veterans for entrepreneurship after they leave the military. The VBOC, which operates under a five-year grant from the federal Small Business Administration, conducts outreach events and one-on-one counseling sessions statewide through its VBOC On the Road initiative. In its first two years of operation, the VBOC has conducted 17 events with 538 attendees and 82 counseling sessions.

On questioning, Colonel Long clarified that the VBOC operates with a three-person staff and that, of the more than 180,000 veterans in New Mexico, approximately 13 percent own their own businesses.

- ★ Deputy Secretary Martinez will contact the federal Department of Defense regarding the status of munitions stored at the former Fort Wingate and provide information to Senator Pinto.

Veterans Business Incubator

Deputy Secretary Martinez informed the committee that a task force comprising representatives from the VSD, Economic Development Department, Workforce Solutions Department and South Valley Economic Development Center, as well as veterans who own businesses, is meeting to develop and open a veterans business incubator in Albuquerque within the next year. The task force is currently looking for funding sources and a location, and it plans to make the incubator self-sustaining within four years. The planning process will include conversations with representatives from the business incubator in Santa Teresa. The incubator would not rely on government funding but would accept it if it were offered.

Minutes

On a motion by Senator Martinez, seconded by Representative Cote, the minutes from the August 7, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved.

Virtual Reality Treatment for PTSD

Representative Hamilton recapped the progress of a committee-endorsed bill from the 2013 session that would have appropriated funds to Western New Mexico University (WNMU) for a virtual reality program for PTSD. The bill did not pass; however, the VSD received \$100,000 in the General Appropriation Act of 2013 for such a program. Representative Hamilton will present a bill for endorsement at the committee's final meeting to establish the program at WNMU.

- ★ Representative Hamilton will meet with Deputy Secretary Martinez, Representative Martinez and Dr. Joseph Shepard regarding the 2013 VSD appropriation for virtual reality treatment for PTSD.

Navajo Code Talkers Museum

Senator Pinto reported that the Navajo Code Talkers Museum and Veterans Center project received a donation of land between Gallup and Window Rock, and it needs \$1 million to proceed with construction.

- ★ Mr. Kovnat will add the project to a future MVAC agenda.

The committee adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

**MINUTES
of the
FIFTH MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**October 9, 2013
Sgt. Willie Estrada Memorial Civic Center
Alamogordo**

D The fifth meeting of the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee was called to order by Representative Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez, co-chair, on October 9, 2013 at 9:10 a.m. at the Sgt. Willie Estrada Memorial Civic Center in Alamogordo.

Present

Sen. Richard C. Martinez, Co-Chair
Rep. Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez,
Co-Chair
Sen. William F. Burt
Rep. Nathan "Nate" Cote
Rep. Bob Wooley

Absent

Rep. Dianne Miller Hamilton
Sen. Daniel A. Ivey-Soto
Sen. William H. Payne

Advisory Members

Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Rep. Thomas A. Anderson
Rep. Yvette Herrell
Sen. John Pinto
Rep. Jeff Steinborn

A

Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Sen. Carlos R. Cisneros
Rep. George Dodge, Jr.
Sen. Timothy M. Keller
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle
Rep. Dennis J. Roch
Rep. Edward C. Sandoval
Sen. Lisa A. Torracco

Staff

Peter Kovnat, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Kathleen Dexter, Researcher, LCS
Jennifer Dana, Intern, LCS

F

Guests

The guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Copies of all handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file.

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Wednesday, October 9

New Mexico State University (NMSU) Military and Veterans Programs

Jacobo Varela, assistant registrar, NMSU, gave an overview of programs for military personnel and veterans at NMSU. Through its outreach efforts on campus, at military bases and through service organizations in the region, NMSU helps service members and veterans access education benefits and tuition and housing assistance from the federal Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Department of Defense (DOD). To date in 2013, these federal programs have paid approximately \$4.8 million in tuition and fees to NMSU for nearly 3,500 military and veteran students enrolled at all of its campuses. In addition to financial concerns, the university works to remove a wide range of barriers commonly faced by military and veteran students, from inconsistent and delayed transcripts to service-related emotional trauma. Because of its efforts to help these students, NMSU has been designated a "military friendly" institution by GI Jobs and Military Advanced Education for the past several years.

Mr. Varela noted that NMSU does not yet have an official veteran resource center (VRC), as does the University of New Mexico (UNM). Such a center would provide more comprehensive and integrated services for military and veteran students, including a VetSuccess on Campus program, a career services advisor and space for a student veterans' association and lounge. Even without a VRC, however, the university hopes to expand its resources for military and veteran students through a Texas Guaranteed Philanthropy grant and other grants being pursued by the university's military and veterans programs, the Counseling and Educational Psychology Department and the Family and Consumer Sciences Department.

On questioning, Mr. Varela and committee members addressed the following topics.

"Honor cords". A survey of comparable institutions found that approximately one-half of them award red, white and blue honor cords to graduating military and veteran students.

Counseling services and suicide. NMSU collaborates with a veterans' clinic in Las Cruces to provide individual and group services for students who need posttraumatic stress disorder treatment. The university's Crisis Assistance Listening Line, or CALL line, while not veteran-specific, does have veterans on staff and will refer veterans to national or regional hotlines that specialize in veteran issues.

GI Bill. The GI Bill covers up to 36 months of tuition for a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree and must be used within 10 years of discharge from the military. Veterans who attend certain university branch campuses in New Mexico are unable to use their GI Bill benefits because the branch campuses provide only associate's degrees; those veterans must transfer to, or take distance courses from, the main campus. Under Chapter 33 of the GI Bill, tuition benefits are paid directly to schools. Housing allowances, which go to the students, may be delayed because of the federal government shutdown, and Mr. Varela will work with affected veterans who need rent deferments.

Military and veteran student employment. The VA funds six work-study positions in NMSU's military and veterans programs. NMSU also has work-study positions in other departments.

Segregation. NMSU does not segregate students by veteran status for either coursework or housing. Veteran students tend to support one another, and certain degree programs, such as engineering, tend to have a high proportion of veterans enrolled.

Alcohol and drug abuse. NMSU's Wellness, Alcohol and Violence Education program addresses alcohol and drug abuse issues for all students, including veterans.

Retention. NMSU has a retention rate of approximately 60 percent for military and veteran students, who tend to start with less than a full course load and take about six years to complete a bachelor's degree. Mandy Dykman, who directs the VRC at UNM, is working with Mr. Varela to strengthen military and veterans programs collaboratively between the two universities and keep veterans in school through their graduation.

Veterans' lounge. NMSU plans to build a lounge for military and veteran students, using collaborative funding from the university and the community.

★ Mr. Varela:

1. will provide contact information to Representative Cote for the NMSU Student Veterans Organization; and
2. invited committee members to a Veterans' Day picnic on November 7, 2013 at NMSU.

Welcome

Mayor Susie Galea welcomed the committee to Alamogordo. She noted that the area is home to many veterans, including many who retired following their service at Holloman Air Force Base (AFB), and that it is a prime location for a veterans cemetery.

White Sands Missile Range (WSMR)

Dan Hicks, deputy to the executive director, WSMR, gave a presentation on work done at WSMR and concerns over the SunZia Southwest Transmission Project, which will provide a high-capacity transmission line for renewable energy production in New Mexico. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has settled on a preferred route for the transmission line that, while it does not enter WSMR, does traverse a section of BLM land north of the missile range that is used for training flights and missile tests. WSMR and adjoining lands provide a training and testing environment that mimics conditions faced by the U.S. military in its current operations in the Middle East. Mr. Hicks expressed concern that having the transmission line at the north end of the range would hamper missile testing that cannot be conducted elsewhere in the U.S. While the DOD supports the development of renewable energy resources and is, itself, under a mandate to partially convert to renewable and alternative energy for its operations, it does not support the

SunZia project as currently proposed and prefers instead that the transmission line be moved north of the area used for missile testing.

On questioning, Mr. Hicks and committee members addressed the following topics.

Final decision on route. The BLM originally planned to make its decision on the route for the SunZia transmission line in October or November; however, the federal government shutdown may delay that decision. The BLM already has all of the information it needs. Brigadier General John Regan, former commander of WSMR, requested that the BLM consider two alternate routes in lieu of the current proposed route, which is not acceptable. U.S. Senator Martin Heinrich requested a study of acceptable test protocols that would allow the DOD to continue its WSMR mission if the BLM-preferred route is adopted.

Other powerlines. There is a local power distribution line north of WSMR that, at 40 feet high, is considered an allowable risk under standards established by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and used by WSMR. Powerlines at the height of the proposed SunZia lines exceed the NASA allowable risk.

Low-level flights and missile testing. Low-level flights by the U.S. Air Force are flown between 400 feet and 500 feet in altitude; the German Air Force flies as low as 100 feet in altitude. WSMR provides the longest test area for such low-level flights, and every bit of the range and its immediate surroundings must be clear to achieve a full "kill chain sequence". If the SunZia transmission line is located beyond the area used for flights and testing, WSMR will not need additional space for future operations.

Base realignment and closures (BRAC). WSMR is relatively safe from the BRAC process because of its unique resources, though it might undergo some mission change.

Electronic filtering. WSMR has the capability to test filtering mechanisms designed to protect electronic systems from solar flares and rogue nation attacks.

SunZia

Tom Wray and John Strand, project manager and governmental affairs director, respectively, SunZia Southwest Transmission Project, gave an update on the SunZia project and challenges presented by WSMR's request to move a portion of the transmission line off the BLM-preferred route. After four years and \$40 million of permitting and studies, the final proposed route crosses the northern edge of the WSMR "call-up area", a block of land that is not part of the missile range but over which the U.S. Air Force conducts training flights. The majority of land in this area is state trust land, and SunZia's lease for right of way through the land would generate long-term revenue for public education. The project would also generate long-term revenue for the state by establishing an export infrastructure for a nondepletable resource and by creating jobs in both the construction and operation stages. SunZia has received letters and resolutions of support from a half dozen local governments based on the current

BLM-preferred route. If the route is approved by the BLM, construction would begin in 2015 and operation would begin in 2017 or 2018. On average, the SunZia transmission line structures would be 135 feet tall.

On questioning, the presenters and committee members addressed the following topics.

Line capacity and use. The project includes two 500 kilovolt transmission lines rated at 3,000 megawatts of total capacity, which equals the entire electrical load from Bernalillo County and eastern Sandoval County. The first substation on the route, located between Corona and Carrizozo, will produce 1,500 megawatts of wind-powered energy. Other renewable energy companies along the route have been unable to feed into existing transmission lines to date because of a lack of capacity on those lines and have expressed interest in the SunZia line. Federal restrictions prohibit discrimination among different types of energy on any given transmission line; the SunZia line must accept both renewable and nonrenewable energy.

Moving the line. The BLM prefers the transmission line's current route because it helps the agency meet its statutory duty to provide additional uses of its land, such as grazing and easements. If the BLM chooses to move the route to accommodate training flights and missile tests, 46 miles would be added to the length of the line at an estimated cost of \$125 million. In addition, a supplemental environmental impact study would be required, and the entire route may be opened up for new studies, which could delay construction by three to four years. Though the estimated cost is \$1.6 billion for the BLM-preferred route and \$2 billion for the WSMR-preferred route, the cost difference is not presented as a comment on the value of servicemembers' lives or the value of their training opportunities.

Speaking from the audience on invitation of the chair, Mr. Hicks clarified that:

1. the DOD did not appropriate the call-up area for WSMR because there were still bad feelings among local ranchers who were displaced when WSMR was first created;
2. the DOD wants the area to serve as a buffer for the missile range's north end;
3. a 2009 letter from Brigadier General David Mann stating that "a route along Highway 380 may be acceptable" was not meant as an endorsement of that route; and
4. WSMR approves of Alternate Routes 1 and 1A.

Minutes

On a motion by Representative Wooley, seconded by Senator Burt, the minutes from the September 3, 2013 meeting were unanimously approved.

Fort Stanton Update

Bill Guthrie, chair, Lincoln/Otero County Veterans Leadership Council, noted that nearly 9,000 veterans live in Lincoln and Otero counties and that the veteran population strongly

supports the establishment of a veterans cemetery at Fort Stanton. He also urged the committee to support legislation to exempt military retirement pay from state income tax.

Larry Holt, volunteer administrator, Fort Stanton, gave a presentation on Fort Stanton's history and its appropriateness as a veterans cemetery. Fort Stanton has been in continuous operation since its establishment in 1899 by the federal government, which converted it to a U.S. Public Health Service hospital and cemetery in 1912. The state acquired the facility and land in 1953, and it has served since then as a state tuberculosis hospital, a facility for the developmentally disabled and a Corrections Department facility. If it is designated by the VA as a veterans cemetery, its 13.5 acres would meet projected needs for the veteran population in southeast New Mexico through 2050. It would also help the VA meet its goal that all veterans have access to a cemetery within 75 miles of their homes. The governor plans to establish three or four rural veterans cemeteries, and Mr. Holt urged the committee to support Fort Stanton as the top priority on the governor's list. In order to receive VA funding for the cemeteries, the state must provide a 10 percent match and agree to provide perpetual maintenance.

Speaking from the audience on invitation of the chair, Alan Martinez, deputy secretary for veterans' services, noted that the Veterans' Services Department is conducting town hall meetings in communities that want veterans cemeteries and that Fort Stanton would be less costly to develop than some because it already has a cemetery on site.

- ★ On a motion by Senator Martinez, seconded by Senator Burt, the committee voted unanimously to send a letter to the governor endorsing the concept of state veterans cemeteries and supporting Fort Stanton as the state's top priority for a cemetery.
- ★ Representative Wooley will sponsor a bill to appropriate the 10 percent match necessary for VA funding for the cemeteries.

Sergeant Fabian Silva

Representative Steinborn presented a certificate of appreciation to Sergeant Fabian Silva for inspiring a 2013 law that allows service members who are deployed or on a temporary duty assignment for more than 30 days to suspend utility and telecommunication services without a penalty or reconnection fee.

Holloman AFB Update

Colonel Andrew A. Croft, commander, 49th Wing, Holloman AFB, presented issues regarding the BLM preferred route for the SunZia transmission line and the location of some windmills planned for an area at the east end of the line. Holloman AFB hosts not only the 49th Wing but also the 44th Fighter Group, 96th Test Group, 4th Space Control Squadron and the German Air Force. These entities use air space for low-level training flights on both the west and east sides of the Sacramento Mountains, an area that includes WSMR, the WSMR call-up area and areas where private wind farms are being developed as part of the SunZia project. Colonel Croft expressed his concern that, in their current proposed locations, windmills and the SunZia transmission line could have a negative impact on current and future training missions

based at Holloman AFB. In order for training to continue in the area, windmills must be adjusted to allow a wide flight-easement, and the SunZia transmission line must be moved beyond the northern boundary of the WSMR call-up area.

On questioning, Colonel Croft clarified that the German Air Force, which recently moved its U.S. command structure from Fort Bliss, pays for its facilities at Holloman AFB. It supports U.S. forces on North Atlantic Treaty Organization-based missions.

Holloman AFB Tour

D Committee members toured Holloman AFB and its facilities.

The committee adjourned at 4:55 p.m.

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**MINUTES
of the
SIXTH MEETING
of the
MILITARY AND VETERANS' AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**November 15, 2013
Room 311, State Capitol
Santa Fe**

D The sixth meeting of the Military and Veterans' Affairs Committee was called to order by Representative Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez, co-chair, on November 15, 2013 at 9:10 a.m. in Room 311 of the State Capitol in Santa Fe.

Present

Rep. Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez,
Co-Chair
Sen. William F. Burt
Rep. Nathan "Nate" Cote
Sen. Daniel A. Ivey-Soto
Sen. William H. Payne
Rep. Bob Wooley

Absent

Sen. Richard C. Martinez, Co-Chair
Rep. Dianne Miller Hamilton

Advisory Members

Rep. Eliseo Lee Alcon
Rep. Thomas A. Anderson
Sen. Craig W. Brandt
Sen. Carlos R. Cisneros
Rep. George Dodge, Jr.
Rep. Yvette Herrell
Rep. Edward C. Sandoval
Rep. Jeff Steinborn

A

Sen. Timothy M. Keller
Sen. John Pinto
Sen. Cliff R. Pirtle
Rep. Dennis J. Roch
Sen. Lisa A. Torracco

Staff

Peter Kovnat, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
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Handouts

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T

Friday, November 15

Fort Bayard Cemetery Construction Update

Steve Best, executive director, Memorial Service Network III, and Steve Davis, engineer, Design and Construction Service, both of the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), gave a presentation on upgrades under way at the Fort Bayard National Cemetery. The \$7 million project includes expansion of the cemetery's burial facilities, including pre-placed in-ground crypts and columbarium niches; new public information, maintenance and committal facilities; and improvements to landscaping, irrigation, roads, parking, drainage and the rostrum and the flag pole areas. Landscaping improvements are based on a "water-wise", or xeriscaping, model that incorporates native drought-tolerant plants and substitutes crushed granite for lawn grass. The upgrade adds approximately 10 years' capacity within the 18.8-acre site; 20 additional contiguous acres are available if the cemetery needs further expansion in the future.

On questioning, the presenters and committee members addressed the following topics.

Burial facilities. Pre-placed crypts are cement boxes placed in the ground before a section is used for burial that provide better soil stability than direct in-ground burial. Space is provided for both the veteran and the veteran's spouse. Cremains may either be buried in-ground or placed in the columbarium. Veterans may be buried at any national cemetery in the country and should make their families aware of their preferences.

Water and xeriscaping. With the recent drought, production from the 18 water wells at the Fort Bayard cemetery has dropped to approximately 60 percent of what the wells produced in the past. The cemetery uses approximately 20 million gallons of water each year; with the switch to xeriscaping, annual water usage is estimated to drop to 2.4 million gallons. When xeriscaping, up to six inches of topsoil are removed and replaced with crushed granite.

Headstones and burial benefits. Headstones are a VA benefit available to veterans regardless of burial location and are generally ordered by the funeral home through the NCA office in Washington, D.C., when a veteran is buried. Veterans and their families may choose either a flat headstone or a vertical headstone in either marble or granite. Bronze headstones are no longer available. Sections within a national cemetery contain either flat or vertical headstones and either marble or granite headstones, but not combinations. Headstones are uniform across all military branches. If a veteran chooses a commercial headstone, the VA will provide a military emblem to be used on the headstone. Families also receive a \$255 burial benefit.

State cemeteries. The VA provides grant money for creating state veterans' cemeteries. To be eligible for the grant funding, a state must provide a 10 percent match, which is refunded to the state during the construction phase. States must maintain the cemeteries; however, the VA will provide "raise and realign" maintenance for the headstones every few years.

Flowers. Families may place flowers on headstones and may use flower containers provided by the cemetery. Flowers are removed after a few days by cemetery staff, who post a notice of when flowers are scheduled for removal. Flowers may not be planted at burial sites.

Speaking from the audience on invitation of the chair, Secretary of Veterans' Services Timothy L. Hale clarified that the Veterans' Services Department (VSD) is moving forward with a program to build up to four rural cemeteries and will request an appropriation from the legislature for the 10 percent match necessary for VA funding. Each cemetery would need no more than two full-time employees.

★ Mr. Best and Mr. Davis will provide information to Representative Martinez on when the Santa Fe National Cemetery is projected to be at full capacity and on plans to increase columbarium space at the cemetery in 2014.

Legislation Proposed for Committee Endorsement

The committee considered four bills for possible endorsement.

Veterans Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) Virtual Reality Treatment Pilot Project

Representative Nate Gentry presented a bill on behalf of Representative Hamilton concerning virtual reality PTSD treatment for veterans. The bill creates the "veterans virtual reality treatment pilot project" to be administered by the VSD in conjunction with Western New Mexico University (WNMU); creates a "veterans virtual reality treatment grants fund" to be administered by the VSD; and appropriates \$250,000 to the VSD to implement the pilot project over a four-year period. Discussion on the bill included the following points and comments.

Treatment effectiveness. The U.S. Department of Defense, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the VA have virtual reality PTSD treatment programs. Studies have shown that 80 percent of participants show reduced PTSD symptoms and 100 percent of participants show reduced anxiety and depression.

WNMU and curriculum. WNMU President Joseph Shepard supports the project but feels that \$250,000 is not enough to cover expenses. The project would be placed within WNMU's social work program, and Grant County would provide housing for participating veterans. Curriculum development, as required by the bill, would not be appropriate until after the pilot project produces results.

Location. Placing the project at the University of New Mexico (UNM) School of Medicine would make it available to more veterans and put it under the scope of neuroscience rather than social work.

Appropriations. The VSD received \$100,000 for this project in the General Appropriation Act of 2013. Further appropriations for the project would come both from the state and from grants. The \$250,000 appropriated in the bill is not enough to create an effective

treatment program — it is "a waste of money" and "beyond what the Veterans' Services Department can shepherd". The appropriation would be better spent on existing New Mexico programs for veterans that have proven results.

No motion was made, nor a vote taken, to endorse the bill.

- ◆ Representative Martinez will work with Secretary Hale to consider the bill in other forms.
- ◆ Representative Gentry will provide Mr. Kovnat with studies on virtual reality treatment for PTSD in veterans; information on who developed and provides the mobile devices used in the treatment; and how long each veteran typically participates in the treatment.

Service Member Child Custody Act

Deputy Secretary Alan Martinez, VSD, and Amanda Pagan, attorney and principal, New Mexico Family Law, P.C., and chief warrant officer two, U.S. Army, presented a bill to enact the Service Member Child Custody Act. The act, which many other states have adopted and which is supported by the Domestic Relations Task Force and judges in the Second Judicial District, addresses child custody issues between deploying and non-deploying parents. The bill will be included in the governor's call for the 2014 legislative session. In discussion, the presenters and committee members noted that: 1) the lack of such statutory protections have led some service members to avoid assignment in New Mexico; and 2) the determination of who has a "close and substantial relationship" with a child is left to a judge's discretion.

Senator Ivey-Soto made a motion, seconded by Representative Wooley, to amend the bill on page 7, line 14, by inserting "or to the non-deploying parent" after "child". The motion was adopted unanimously.

On a motion by Representative Cote, seconded by Representative Wooley, the committee voted unanimously to endorse the bill.

Fort Stanton Cemetery Maintenance Appropriation

Representative Wooley presented a bill that would appropriate \$650,000 to the VSD for maintenance and improvement of the cemetery at Fort Stanton Historic Site. The appropriation would be contingent on the VSD receiving a VA grant of \$6,500,000. Secretary Hale clarified that the state money appropriated in the bill could be used for the intended purposes, but making it contingent on receipt of a VA grant is not appropriate because VA money cannot be used on a cemetery that is not a VA-designated state veteran cemetery. In addition, Fort Stanton is not under the control of the VSD but, rather, the Cultural Affairs Department (CAD). In discussion, the presenters and committee members considered amending the bill to send the appropriation to the CAD and also to remove the contingency language, but no motion was made to amend nor was a vote taken. Secretary Hale reviewed the VSD's initiative to establish rural veteran cemeteries. He noted that Fort Stanton is one location under consideration, although a new cemetery would have to be built on the site and fenced off from the old because VA funds cannot be spent on a state monument facility.

No motion was made, nor a vote taken, to endorse the bill.

- ◆ Representative Cote made a motion, seconded by Representative Wooley, that the committee send a letter to Secretary of Cultural Affairs Veronica Garcia to request funding to maintain the Fort Stanton cemetery, with copies sent to the Legislative Finance Committee, the Senate Finance Committee and the House Appropriations and Finance Committee. The motion was unanimously adopted. Representative Wooley, Senator Burt and Secretary Hale will meet with Secretary Garcia on the request.

Veteran-Owned Business Preference Memorial

Mr. Kovnat presented a memorial requesting that the committee assess the oversight, implementation and effectiveness of the resident veteran-owned business preference for state purchases during its 2014 interim work. He noted that a bill addressing the topic would have required a message from the governor but that a memorial does not.

On a motion by Representative Cote, seconded by Senator Burt, the committee voted unanimously to endorse the memorial.

Other Business

Representative Cote raised concerns that, according to a Dona Ana veterans' advocate, Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps (JROTC) is no longer certified for physical education credit in high schools.

- ◆ Deputy Secretary Martinez will research issues with the Public Education Department regarding whether high school students may receive physical education credits for JROTC participation and provide information to Representatives Cote and Martinez.

Representative Cote announced that the Continental Divide Trail Coalition will sponsor a wounded warriors hiking program in 2014 in which combat veterans will hike the Continental Divide Trail south to north, starting in Hachita. He requested that committee members support the hikers as they pass through communities along the trail. A similar program includes cyclists who bike along the Continental Divide Trail from Canada to Mexico.

Public Comment

Don Arnold, veterans' advocate, spoke in favor of expanding veterans' property tax exemptions to include those who are less than 100 percent disabled and to include veterans who are senior citizens. New Mexico is one of only nine states to give property tax exemptions to veterans, and these exemptions can help the state retain service members after they retire. Mr. Arnold also requested that the committee propose legislation to appropriate money for honor guard organizations, which operate on a small stipend from the VSD and get no federal money.

- ◆ Mr. Arnold will work with Deputy Secretary Martinez to draft proposed legislation expanding property tax exemptions for veterans, based on legislation introduced during the 2013 legislative session.

Chuck Howe, president, National Veterans Wellness and Healing Center, described the center's successful PTSD treatment program for veterans and their spouses. Representative Wooley noted that he will sponsor a \$250,000 appropriation for the center.

D The committee adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

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