

SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT

Michael Peck

January 2015

Bob Cloud Memorial

As noted at our last meeting, VAC Volunteer Bob Cloud has passed away. The VAC has received over \$1,200 in donations as a memorial for Bob. Bob's service to the VAC will be greatly missed.

VISN 12 Meeting

Our VISN 12 VSO meeting was held on January 8th. A topic of discussion was the VA Secretary's Blue Print for Excellence. Lovell FHCC will be have its VSO meeting on Tuesday, January 12th at 10:30AM.

Veterans Closet Open

The Midwest Veterans Closet is now open at 2323 N. Greenbay Road. All excess clothing from our stand down on October 21 was donated to the closet. As we near a possible move to Lovell FHCC for our claims work we are anticipating moving the Veterans Drop In Center from Waukegan to the closet. The Patient Stakeholders Group at Lovell has urged the Director, Lovell FHCC to add the closet to a drop off for the Lovell Shuttle Bus. On December 15th, Allan Ayers (VAC employment specialist) will set up some computers at the Veterans Closet. Until a decision is made on our possible move, ComCast has allowed us to operate computers from both locations.

Thanksgiving Dinner

Our final count for thanksgiving was 70 families. This means we fed over 700 people. This is our joint program with Smokin T's and the students at Stevenson High School.

Christmas Dinner 2014

We had 30 veterans on our Christmas dinner list. The VAC provided funds for 12 left over from Thanksgiving.

Toys For Tots

Sherry has picked up the toys for the VAC Christmas Gift program, they will be distributed the week of December 15-19 from the VAC office.

Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption

The Veterans Assistance Commission (VAC) of Lake County is in the process of cross checking Disabled Veterans Homestead and Senior Homestead Exemptions with its roll of veterans rated at 50% or more by the VA. Already, the initial check has been producing an average of \$1,000 in tax exemptions. Superintendent Peck reports that many of those eligible included Post Commanders for the VFW and American Legion in Lake County. Its just surprising that with all the outreach we have conducted that

veterans are not aware of these tax exemptions. The savings for the two thousand veterans who have not signed up for the exemptions could exceed a million dollars.

A recently signed bill by Governor Quinn prompted the check as veterans were confused between the Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption which gives \$2,500 off the appraised value of the home for disabilities rated at 50 -60% and \$5,000 for those rated at 70-100%. The bill signed by the Governor was for the Special Adapted housing for work done to the house by the VA, which raised the value for the exemption from \$70,000 to \$100,000 and this would include those homes provided to the disabled veteran as a gift. Senior Homestead Exemptions are for anybody (veteran or non-veteran) who has reached the age of 65 during the tax year and own and live in the property as their principal residence. You can obtain the forms and learn more about Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption and Senior Homestead Exemption by logging onto <http://assessor.lakecountyil.gov> hover over "Property Tax Relief, and go to "Seniors" or "Veterans and Disabled Persons".

The Disabled Veterans Homestead exemption will also be extend to the surviving spouse after the veterans death. Veterans /widow must reapply each year for the exemption. Once they are listed, the assessors office and the VAC will send a reminder.

Lovell Town Hall Meeting

Lovell FHCC has scheduled a town hall meeting for Thursday, January 29th at 11AM in Building 4.

Jeffries Nominated for IDVA Director

Governor Rauner announced on January 16th the nomination of Erica Jeffries as IDVA Director. Jeffries 38, is a USMA graduate with a Masters in Security Studies from Georgetown University. She served 5 years as Captain and Black Hawk Pilot on active duty. We are still pursuing the state accreditation for County Service Officers. Grant Swinger, formerly Chief of the AG's Veterans Rights Bureau is now Chief counsel for IDVA. Tom Banning was just named as the Chief of the AG's Veterans Right Bureau.