

Veterans Initiatives in Maine

Status of Ongoing VA Projects in Maine

Updated April 2, 2009

Bangor CBOC: The VA is committed to creating a new community-based outreach clinic (CBOC) in Bangor. Thanks to the actions of the Maine Legislature, state land was transferred to the Maine Veteran's Home last year and this land will be the site for the future Bangor CBOC. The VA is in the solicitation process right now. They are hoping to receive final builder submissions and select a winning developer for the CBOC very soon. It should take about 18 months from final submission to occupancy. So, we can expect the new Bangor CBOC to open sometime around September 2010.

Lewiston-Auburn CBOC: I continue to work with the VA to make sure that the CBOC in Lewiston/Auburn is opened soon. Togus recently outlined its space and design requirements, and the solicitation process will begin shortly. The process and timeline will be similar to that of the Bangor CBOC, and we can expect the Lewiston/Auburn CBOC to open sometime around the first quarter of 2011. Because community expectations of the opening of the Lewiston/Auburn CBOC continue to grow, I reiterated the need to move forward on this CBOC to VA Secretary Eric Shinseki during a recent meeting.

Rural Mobile Health Care Clinic: Later this year, Maine is slated to receive a new mobile health care clinic. This mobile clinic will be state-of-the-art and will be outfitted to bring primary care and mental health services closer to veterans in Maine's most rural counties. Through a local contractor, the mobile clinic will be parked at regional medical centers in Jackman, Bingham, Greenville and Dover-Foxcroft. The mobile clinic is currently under construction with delivery to Togus expected around May 2009 and deployed to the above communities starting in June or early July 2009.

Mobile Counseling Centers: The VA is in the process of putting two mobile counseling centers into service in Maine. The two 38-foot motor coaches, which have spaces for confidential counseling, will be attached to the Lewiston and Caribou VetCenters. These vehicles carry VetCenter counselors and outreach workers to events and activities to reach veterans in broad geographic, rural areas. The VetCenter is now hiring for staff for the mobile counseling centers and anticipates deploying them around the state very soon.

Veteran Cemeteries: On September 22, 2008 the VA announced a grant award in the amount of \$4,275, 187 for the establishment of a new state veteran's cemetery in Springvale. This grant is funding one hundred percent of the cost of the new cemetery, including construction of the main entrance, full casket and cremain burial areas, columbaria, roads an assembly area, a committal shelter, maintenance building, and supporting infrastructure. Groundbreaking for the cemetery occurred in October 2008 and construction is progressing well. Maine Veterans' Services is expecting a grand opening around October 1, 2009.

Maine Veterans' Services is also working with the VA to fund an expansion of the Niche Walls at the Northern Maine Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Caribou, and anticipate that funding will happen this fiscal year. They are discussing a potential Niche/Columbarium Wall for the Augusta cemeteries to be done in 2010/2011.

Veterans Health Care Access Point in Houlton: Beginning in March 2008, a VA doctor has been working one day a week at the Houlton Regional Hospital in order to serve veterans in this highly rural area.

