

# Veterans Summary

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Below are a few of our greatest achievements this session:

- **Minneapolis Veterans Home:** The bonding bill included \$2,000,000 for asset preservation to the 50+ MDVA buildings state wide and \$700,000 for restoration and repairs of the Minneapolis deep tunnel.
- **Veteran-Owned Small Business:** This session yielded gains to Veteran small businesses. New law now authorizes Veteran-owned small business and enables them to receive state level certification using rules already in place for small business, socially disadvantaged small business or economically disadvantaged area small businesses. This will lighten the burden on Veteran business certifications as the state can now perform the required certifications to compete for state funded business. Funding to make this an efficient process will need to be sought in the next budget year.
- **Woman Veteran License Plate:** For several years now our Veterans have received recognition of their valuable service as members of the military through specialty license plates. There are a variety of Veterans' plates, however, there has never been one specifically for our women Veterans. This year women Veterans gained the recognition they deserve by passing a new law authorizing a new Woman Veteran license plate.
- **Military and Veteran Resident Tuition Rates:** Although Minnesota's state colleges are very supportive of Veteran students and already had internal policies to ensure tuition rates for Veterans were at the most affordable levels, a new law was passed to codify the fact that Veterans from across the nation with an honorable discharge can take advantage of Minnesota's public post-secondary education opportunities at an in-state tuition rate.

Lastly, in the coming months, MDVA will be promoting its legislative accomplishments by visiting Veterans in their communities and meeting Veterans' groups throughout the state. We look forward to sharing these accomplishments with you and getting your feedback. To review all legislation passed this session, visit:

<http://mn.gov/governor/resources/legislation/>

Related Chp/Bill	Amount of MDVA Bonding and Effective Date	Purpose
The total <b>New Capital Investment</b> appropriation for MDVA is <b>\$2,700,000</b> . Unless otherwise specified, the appropriations in this act are available until the project is completed or abandoned subject to Minnesota Statutes, section 16A.642.		
Chp. 294 HF 2490	<b>\$2,000,000</b> Effective Date: The day following final enactment	<b>Asset Preservation:</b> For asset preservation improvements and betterments of a capital nature at the Veterans Homes in Minneapolis, Fergus Falls, Hastings, Luverne, and Silver Bay and up to \$70,000 for the Little Falls Veterans Cemetery, to be spent in accordance with Minnesota Statutes, section 16B.307.
Chp. 294 HF 2490	<b>\$700,000</b> Effective Date: The day following final enactment	<b>Minneapolis Deep Tunnel:</b> To complete the design of and perform repairs to stabilize the structural integrity of and waterproof the deep tunnel on the Minneapolis Veterans Home campus. These funds may be used for asbestos and hazardous materials abatement related to this project.
Chp. 294 HF 2490	<b>\$1,366,000 NOT NEW MONEY,</b> simply a language change. Effective Date: The day following final enactment	<b>Minneapolis Veterans Home Centralized Pharmacy:</b> To predesign, design, remodel, and furnish Building 15 or another building located on the Minneapolis Veterans Home Campus to be used as the Veterans Homes central pharmacy.

<p>Chp. 294 HF 2490</p>	<p>\$18,935,000 <b>NOT NEW MONEY</b>, simply a language change. Effective Date: The day following final enactment</p>	<p><b>Veterans Affairs:</b> (a) Of this amount, up to \$1,750,000 is to the commissioner of administration to: (1) construct a new distribution and service tunnel to serve Buildings 17 north and 18 and the future Building 17 south; and (2) construct steam and electrical connections, related infrastructure, site work, a canopy with vestibule, and required modifications to Building 18 drop-off and entry. This appropriation is not available until the commissioner of management and budget has determined that at least \$5,000,000 has been committed from federal sources. Any unused funds may be used under paragraph (b). (b) The remainder of this amount is to the commissioner of administration to complete the design of, perform hazardous materials abatement for, and demolish the south wing of Building 17 and adjoining buildings; design, reconstruct, and furnish the new south wing of Building 17 and adjoining buildings as a new skilled nursing building; construct a new distribution and service tunnel to serve buildings 6, 19, and the future 17 south; and design, construct, and equip a network and server room, including installation of new fiber optic lines. This appropriation is not available until the commissioner of management and budget has determined that the funds to complete this work have been committed from federal sources.</p>
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## New Veterans Session Law & Additional Funds

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**Veteran-Owned Small Business:** A significant change was adopted this year relative to Veteran-owned small business. A Veteran business that is majority owned and operated by a Veteran can receive certification and up to a six percent preference (except when mandated by the federal government as a condition of receiving federal funds) through the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Administration. The issue in the past has been that Veterans could only receive these preference points if they were certified as a Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB) at the federal level. Based on feedback from Minnesota Veteran businesses, that was a timely and arduous task and sometimes difficult for small businesses. This new law allows VOSB's to now use existing rules which outline requirements for certification in order to compete for state funds. Below is the new provision in Minnesota Statute 16C.19:

- (a) A small business wishing to participate in the programs under section 16C.16, subdivisions 4 to 7, must be certified by the commissioner. The commissioner shall adopt by rule standards and procedures for certifying that small businesses, small targeted group businesses, and small businesses located in economically disadvantaged areas, and Veteran-owned small businesses are eligible to participate under the requirements of sections 16C.16 to 16C.21. The commissioner shall adopt by rule standards and procedures for hearing appeals and grievances and other rules necessary to carry out the duties set forth in sections 16C.16 to 16C.21.
- (b) The commissioner may make rules which exclude or limit the participation of nonmanufacturing business, including third-party lessors, brokers, franchises, jobbers, manufacturers' representatives, and others from eligibility under sections 16C.16 to 16C.21.
- (c) The commissioner may make rules that set time limits and other eligibility limits on business participation in programs under sections 16C.16 to 16C.21.
- (d) Notwithstanding paragraph (c), for purposes of sections 16C.16 to 16C.21, a Veteran-owned small business, the principal place of business of which is in Minnesota, is certified if it has been verified by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs as being either a Veteran-owned small business or a service-disabled Veteran-owned small business, in accordance with Public Law 109-461 and Code of Federal Regulations, title 38, part 74.

(e) Until rules are adopted pursuant to paragraph (a) for the purpose of certifying Veteran-owned small businesses, the provisions of Minnesota Rules, part 1230.1700, may be read to include Veteran-owned small businesses. In addition to the documentation required in Minnesota Rules, part 1230.1700, the Veteran owner must have been discharged under honorable conditions from active service, as indicated by the Veteran owner's most current United States Department of Defense form DD-214. Effective Date August 1, 2014. (Chapter 312 HF 3172)

**Peace Officer Licensing Exam:** This year there were again changes to the eligibility requirements for the peace officers exam—Minnesota Statute 626.8517. The amended law will allow service members or Veterans with relevant military law enforcement experience to be eligible to take a reciprocity exam to work in Minnesota law enforcement. Veterans or service members must provide the necessary documentation for service or discharge as well as: two years of experience in a law enforcement military occupational specialty (MOS) in addition to a two-year degree from a regionally accredited institution; or four years cumulative experience in a law enforcement MOS. This again reduces the burden of redundant training and experience for Veterans thus creating a faster and smoother transition into an analogous civilian occupation. Effective Date: Following final enactment. (Chapter 268 HF 1915)

**In-State Tuition Fees:** The State Government and Veterans Affairs omnibus supplemental appropriations bill amended Minnesota Statute 135A.043 by adding a new section for Veterans. Minnesota Statute 135A.0431 now states: MILITARY VETERANS; RESIDENT TUITION. (a) A person who is honorably discharged from the armed forces of the United States is entitled to the resident tuition rate at Minnesota public postsecondary institutions. (b) This section is in addition to any other statute, rule, or higher education institution regulation or policy providing eligibility for a resident tuition rate or its equivalent to a student. This means students at these institutions who do not have a primary residence of Minnesota can receive instate tuition prices. Effective Date: academic terms beginning after August 1, 2014. (Chapter 312 HF 3172)

**De-Escalation Training:** In the State Government and Veterans Affairs omnibus supplemental appropriations bill, \$50,000 was appropriated in fiscal year 2015 to the Peace Officer Standards and Training Board (POST) for training state and local community safety personnel in crisis de-escalation techniques for use with Minnesota Veterans following their return from active military service in a combat zone. The director may consult with any other state or local governmental official or nongovernmental authority that the director determines to be relevant, to include postsecondary institutions, when selecting a service provider for this training. The training provider must have a demonstrated understanding of the transitions and challenges that veterans may experience during their re-entry into society following combat service. The training opportunities provided must be reasonably distributed statewide. This is a onetime appropriation. Effective Date: July 1, 2014. (Chapter 312 HF 3172)

**Veteran Memorials:** \$450,000 was designated to complete design of and construct a memorial in the Capitol Area to honor all Hmong-Lao Veterans of the war in Laos who were allied with the American forces during the Vietnam War. This appropriation is not available until the Commissioner of Management and Budget has determined that at least \$90,000 has been committed to the project from non-state sources. Effective Date: July 1, 2014. (Chapter 294 HF 2490))

The city of Edina received \$225,000 for a Veterans memorial. These funds are not available until the Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget has determined that an equal amount is available through non-state sources. The city of Edina Veterans Memorial will be a unifying symbol of shared community values in honoring all Edina Veterans — past, present and future. The design is a V-shaped granite plaza (for "victory") leading up to the focal point of an eagle and wreath design. The wall will feature the names of the 32 Edina soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty since the City's founding. Three flagpoles will be placed at the edge of the plaza hoisted with the American flag, state flag, and POW flag. An all-volunteer committee has been working on this project since 2010. Effective Date: July 1, 2014. (Chapter 295 HF 1068)

North St. Paul received \$100,000 for a Veterans memorial. These funds are not available until the Commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget has determined that an equal amount is available through non-state sources. Though the artwork is still being finalized, the plans for the North St. Paul Veterans Park will feature engraved paver stones honoring all U.S. Veterans who provided honorable military service. The pavers will be placed randomly in three memorial red striped areas or may be requested to be side-by-side or rows with other pavers of family or

comrades. Also present will be the American flag, state flag, and POW flag. The North St. Paul Veteran's Park Foundation (NSPVPF) has been working for a number of years to create a public space to give tribute to Veterans and their loved ones. Effective Date: July 1, 2014. (Chapter 294 HF 2490)

**The Veterans Voices Program:** \$125,000 is from the arts and cultural heritage fund for the Veterans' Voices program to educate and engage the community regarding Veterans' contributions, knowledge, skills, and experiences. Of this amount, \$25,000 is for transfer to the Association of Minnesota Public Education Radio Stations for statewide programming to promote the Veterans' Voices program. This is a one-time appropriation. Effective Date: July 1, 2014. (Chapter 312 HF3172)

The month of October is designated as Veterans' Voices Month in recognition of the state's desire to honor, recognize, and celebrate the contributions of Veterans. Schools, organizations, and communities in the state are encouraged to hold events and programs that honor Veterans and educate students and citizens about the unique culture of the military by sharing and studying Veterans' experiences through stories, essays, poetry, and art from the men and women who have served in the armed forces. The state declares that in order to educate the public, the governor may promote and encourage the observance of Veterans' Voices Month. Effective Date: Following final enactment. (Chapter 267 HF 2812)

**New Veteran License Plates:** Two new laws were created relative to Veteran specialty license plates. The first was within HF 2092 which authorized a smaller motorcycle version of the existing "Combat Wounded Vet" license plate. In order to get this new plate, payment of the registration tax required by law, and compliance with other applicable laws relating to vehicle registration and licensing is required. Effective Date: August 1, 2014 (Chapter 280 HF 2092)

The second Veteran specialty plate gained this session is the "Woman Veteran" license plate for both automobiles and motorcycles. Within the language of the bill there are criteria that must be met and approved by the Commissioners of Public Safety, Veterans Affairs the Woman Veterans Initiative Working Group as well as any other Veteran Service Organization that desires to assist in the design development. These plates will cost \$10 to purchase and the funds will go towards the development and distribution of the plates by the Department of Public Safety. Effective Date: January 1, 2015. (Chapter 207 HF 1916)

**Honorary Naming:** The bridge over the Mississippi River on marked Trunk Highway 60 at the city of Wabasha is designated "Michael Duane Clickner Memorial Bridge." The commissioner of transportation shall adopt a suitable design to mark this bridge and erect appropriate signs, subject to Minnesota Statute 161.139. Sergeant Clickner was the only resident of Wabasha killed during the Vietnam War. Effective Date: August 1, 2014. (Chapter 287 HF 2214)

Additionally, Minnesota Statute 161.14 was amended by adding a subdivision to read: That segment of Route No. 46, signed as U.S. Highway 8 on the effective date of this section, from the southwestern border of Chisago City to the eastern border of Center City, is designated as "Nicholas Patrick Spehar Memorial Highway." Subject to Minnesota Statute 161.139, the commissioner shall adopt a suitable design to mark this highway and erect appropriate signs. Special Warfare Operator Petty Officer 2nd Class (SEAL) Nicholas Patrick Spehar of Chisago City was killed in combat operations in Afghanistan. Effective Date: August 1, 2014. (Chapter 216 HF 2219)

**Disabled Veterans Transit:** Within the State Government and Veterans Affairs omnibus supplemental appropriations bill there was again a provision for a \$78,000 grant to greater Minnesota transit providers as reimbursement for the costs of providing fixed route public transit rides free of charge under Minnesota Statutes, section 174.24, subdivision 7, for Veterans certified as disabled. Effective Date: July 1, 2014. (Chapter 312, HF 3172)

**Taxes:** Minnesota Statutes 2012, section 273.13, subdivision 34, was amended. This law pertains to the homestead of disabled Veterans or family caregivers. This is the law that allows for a tax exclusion for Veterans with an honorable discharge and a service connected disability of 70-100%. With that disability rating, one can receive from \$150,000-\$300,000 in market value tax exclusion on their homestead property. In the past years this law has slowly evolved to authorize the surviving spouse to maintain the exclusion after the death of the qualified Veteran. This year the

surviving spouses' qualification period was expanded from five years post death to eight years. This new law is effective for taxes payable in 2015, and applies to homesteads that initially qualified for the exclusion for taxes payable in 2009 and thereafter. Effective Date: August 1, 2014. (Chapter 308 HF 3167)

**Camp Ripley/Veteran State Trail:** Within the final Capital Investment bill, \$1,732,000 was appropriated to further develop the Camp Ripley/Veterans Trail. The Camp Ripley/Veterans State Trail is one of Minnesota's newest state trails, authorized by the Minnesota Legislature in 2009. The trail is envisioned as a multi-use system, accommodating a variety of motorized and non-motorized uses, linking the Soo Line Trail south of Little Falls to Crow Wing State Park and the Paul Bunyan State Trail. Effective Date: Following final enactment. (Chapter 294 HF 2490)