

Joint Committee on State Building Construction

By Gregg Burden

Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office

October 5, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to brief the Joint Committee on State Building Construction. I am Gregg Burden, Director of the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office. Attending with me today is Pam Rodriguez our Chief Fiscal Officer, Wayne Bollig our Deputy Director, Eric Rohleder our Cemetery Director, Kafer Peele our Veterans Home Superintendent at Winfield, and David Smith our Veterans Home Superintendent at Ft. Dodge.

The Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office (KCVAO) is privileged to support the quarter million veterans who live in the State of Kansas. Our mission is to serve Kansas veterans, survivors, and their dependents with dignity and compassion. The KCVAO is a principal advocate in ensuring that they receive information, advice, direction, and assistance through the coordination of programs and services on state and federal benefits: medical care, benefits, social support, and lasting memorials in recognition of their service to Kansas and the nation.

The goal of the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office is to ensure Kansas veterans and their families receive all the services and benefits they have earned in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible. These services and benefits include; long-term nursing and assisted living care to eligible veterans and dependents, interment options and maintenance of four state veterans' cemeteries, and coordination with federal agencies to provide financial assistance to Kansas veterans for health care and disability income.

The agency also administers the Veterans' Claims Assistance Program a system by which the eligible residents of Kansas can obtain assistance and advice in procuring benefits from the state and federal governments in the area of veterans' or survivors' benefits. These services are provided through 13 field offices located throughout the state, Quality Assurance Office, two Mobile Vans, and six Veteran Services Organizations offices (funding provided by a State Grant) located in the Federal Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA) Medical Centers in Topeka, Leavenworth, and Wichita.

That is just a brief overview of the services and programs the KCVAO provides. The KCVAO recognizes that there are growing issues in our State concerning our veterans such as access to medical and mental health services, job opportunities, education, and many other concerns. Our goal is to support the State in addressing these very important needs required for our veterans.

Our approved FY 2017 capital improvement plan contains two projects for the Kansas Veterans' Home, eight projects for the Kansas Soldiers' Home and three projects for the Cemetery Program. The Veterans' Home projects are replacement of flooring in Triplett Hall and replacement of all windows in Bleckley Hall. The window replacements will greatly enhance resident comfort, and the current single-pane windows develop condensation and do not perform an efficient job in keeping cold air from seeping into resident rooms.

The Soldiers' Home projects include the Custer House kitchen and bathrooms renovations, Pershing Barracks access renovation, the Halsey Hall kitchen remodeling, Lincoln Hall electrical upgrade, installing a covered

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entrance for Halsey Hall, replacing roofs in five cottages, and renovating the access for Lincoln and Grant Halls. Both the Pershing and Lincoln/Grant Halls' access will make those building entrances ADA-compliant. The Halsey Hall kitchen remodeling will make the kitchen operation more energy-efficient. This kitchen provides meals for all residents throughout the campus. The Lincoln Hall electrical update will install additional electrical outlets in resident rooms. With the advancement of electronics, most residents do not have enough outlets to accommodate their needs. The covered entrance in Halsey Hall will protect residents entering into vehicles during inclement weather, keeping the rain or snow from the residents.

The Cemetery Program projects include installing roofs on the storage units at the WaKeeney Cemetery and replacing carpeting and painting the Administrative Building at WaKeeney. This cemetery has not had any capital improvement projects since it was built in 2004.

For FY 2018 the KCVAO is requesting approval for eight projects at the Kansas Veterans Home, six projects at the Kansas Soldiers Home and one project for the Cemetery Program.

- KVH Retrofit Sewage Lift Station for Donlon Hall – original equipment is over 30 years old and if were to experience a sewage backup residents would have to be relocated.
- Install Covered Walkway for Bleckley and Donlon Hall – provides covered walkway from the buildings to the loading/unloading areas for residents and visitors.
- Replace Double Doors (4) for Bleckly Hall – these were the original doors from the old State Hospital and require replacement to meet code.
- Replace Ceiling Fan Coil Units in Gulf War Hallway – these were the original units from the State Hospital and do not work and are unable to control humidity through climate control.
- Replace Double Doors (2) in Gulf War Hallway - these were the original doors from the old State Hospital and require replacement to meet code.
- Replace Air Handlers for Timmerman Hall – these units are over 30 years old and aid in controlling the facility temperature in rooms.
- Window Replacement at Staff Homes (3) – the windows are single-pane and in need of replacement with a total of 85 windows.
- Hagemeister and Ferguson Doors Installation – residents here can't access the courtyard and this project will provide a new ADA compliant entrance.

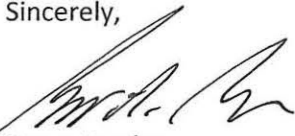
- 3 yr project
Demolition of Campus Structures – buildings include 318 Pershing, building 226 and 332, and 434 Custer.
- Campus Wide Security Cameras – installation of a campus wide security camera/video monitoring system to enhance the security and safety for all residents and staff.
- Keyless Entry Campus Wide – this project will address exterior and interior door systems campus wide.
- Pershing Emergency Power System – ensure staff and residents can safely exit building and provide backup power to computer systems.
- Lincoln Hall Covered Breezeway – will replace the flat roof structure with A-frame roof at four breezeways and two porch locations.
- Custer House HVAC Renovation – this will replace the current system of window air conditioners, fans, steam/radiator distribution system, and space heaters for the residence.

- Preplaced Grave Liners at all Cemeteries – this project will place 40 oversized grave liners at all four cemeteries.

Looking to the future, the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs Office will strive to ensure Kansas maintains its special place as a veteran-friendly state. We will pursue initiatives that allow us to remain at the forefront of veteran advocacy, ensure we maintain secure veterans' homes, and provide state cemeteries that are memorials to honor our veterans. We will continue to work closely with the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA) and monitor the requirements and feasibility of future long-term care needs and services for Kansas veterans. The department will analyze the possibility of new home construction as well as other options to assist veterans.

On behalf of the KCVAO, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to brief the committee and for your continued support. I look forward to working with the Joint Committee on State Building Construction and other parties as we move forward working together helping veterans and their dependents. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Sincerely,



Gregg Burden

Director

Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs Office

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