



Serving Those Who Served

Lancaster County veteran News

Issue 49

January 2016

Homeless Warming Center

Now Open & Need Volunteers

L.A.C.H. (The Lancaster Area Coalition for the Homeless) has been working hard to expand services for our homeless and to raise awareness around issues of homelessness in our county and we would like your help in doing so. L.A.C.H. has worked hard to increase the services available and we are pleased to announce the opening of the Lancaster Warming Center which will begin operating on January 4, 2016. The winter months are a time when the most vulnerable members of our community are most vulnerable to the elements. We will need much more community support moving forward and we are offering many opportunities for the community to get involved. *LACH will be hosting a Ribbon-cutting for the warming center on Monday, January 11th at 5:30pm.* The warming center is the basement of the property located at 721 Arch Street, the old Boys Home. (Walk to the back of the home)

The Warming Center will be open overnight from 6:00pm until 7:00am until the end of February, and will require a volunteer to oversee nightly operations as well as to supply meals for guests. We currently only have enough cots to place 10 individuals. If no one shows up by 8:00pm needing services the center will be closed for the evening. If your church or group would like to commit to getting involved in this mission we would ask that you commit to this for one week's time of our total operating season. Providing meals would include a dinner meal and breakfast day bags for guests to take with them when leaving in the morning. Overnight volunteers will be required to attend a procedural training session and to pass a background check, L.A.C.H. would cover the expense of the SLED background check.

For more information please reach out to Coalition Chairperson, Melanie Outlaw or Kevin McCray at 803-283-8923 or Vice Chairperson, Gina Amato at 803-804-8819.



Calendar of Events:

- Jan 4 — American Legion meeting @ 7:00
- Jan 5 — Fort Lawn Veteran Service Group
- Jan 11 — DAV meeting @ 7:00pm
- Jan 23 — IL VFW meeting @9:30am
- Jan 26 — MCL meeting

Every Wednesday VetCenter Counselor and SCWorks Representative is on site

Contact Us:

Lancaster County VA
1033 West Meeting St
PO Box 1809
Lancaster SC 29721
803-283-2469
803-416-9497
VAOffice@lancastercountysc.net

Lawyers 4 Vets

For low income veterans

Lawyers 4 Vets connects lower-income Veterans living at or below 200% of the federal poverty guidelines with local attorneys who provide one-on-one pro bono legal advice or representation. Beginning May 15, 2014, Lawyers 4 Vets will assist Veterans by appointment only with:

- ◆ Obtaining identification (Social Security, South Carolina ID, birth certificates)
- ◆ Child support and visitation issues in South Carolina
- ◆ Expungements and pardons in South Carolina
- ◆ Consumer protection
- ◆ Simple wills and healthcare power of attorney

Veterans seeking information about the clinic should call 1-877-289-6000.

Free counseling for war time veterans VetCenter

A counselor from the Vet Center is available twice a month in Lancaster for war time veterans and their dependents. The Vet Center offers a wide range of services to help you make a successful transition from military to civilian life. You have earned these benefits and there is no cost to you or your family members.

- Individual & group Counseling
- Family Counseling for military related
- Bereavement counseling for families
- Military sexual trauma
- Outreach & education
- Substance abuse assessment & referral
- Employment assessment & referral
- VBA benefits explanation & referral
- Screening & referral for medical issues



New Members Appointed

VA Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans

WASHINGTON – The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced the appointment of four new members to the Advisory Committee on Minority Veterans. The committee was chartered on November 2, 1994, and advises the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the needs of the nation's 4.7 million minority Veterans on compensation, health care, rehabilitation, outreach and other benefits and programs administered by the VA. The committee assesses the needs of Veterans who are minority group members and recommends program improvements designed to meet their needs. The committee members are appointed to two or three-year terms. Minority Veterans comprise nearly 21 percent of the total Veteran population in the United States and its territories.

The new committee members are:

Melissa Castillo: Navy Veteran of San Antonio, Texas. Served as the Assistant Regional Director for San Antonio Region, Veterans County Service Officer Association of Texas; Assistant Women Veterans Coordinator; Advisor to the US Army Survivor Outreach Services Program; and Advisor to the Alamo Community College District Veterans Affairs Committee. Currently serves as the Assistant Veterans Service Officer at the Bexar County Veterans Service Office in San Antonio, Texas, and is an accredited Veterans Service Officer.

Benno Cleveland: Army Veteran of Fairbanks, Alaska. Served two tours in Dong Tam, Vietnam where he earned a Purple Heart. He also served as Senior Vice Commander and Department Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart. In recognition of his distinguished military service, the Alaska Federation of Natives bestowed him with their "Veteran of the Year" honors in 2014 at their Annual Convention in Anchorage. Mr. Cleveland also founded the Alaska Native Veterans Association and is currently serving as President.

Ginger Miller: Navy Veteran of Accokeek, Maryland, and former homeless disabled Veteran. Ms. Miller became Founder and CEO of two nonprofit organizations that serve Veterans and their families: John 14:2, Inc. and Women Veterans Interactive. She served as Chairwoman of the Prince George's County Veterans Commission; Commissioner, Maryland Commission for Women; member of the Maryland Veterans Resilience Advisory Council; and a member of the Maryland Caregivers Support Coordinating Council. She is currently a member of Disabled American Veterans.

Xiomara Sosa: Army Veteran of Summerville, South Carolina. Ms. Sosa is the Founder and Principal of XAS Consulting, LLC, an integrative mental healthcare and holistic wellness consulting firm. She served on the Women Veteran Social Justice board of directors; Military Partners and Families Veteran Initiative; the Semper Fidelis Health and Wellness Advisory Board; and a current member of the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc.



New LARS Program

Now available for Local Veterans

Our office has partnered with the following Veterans Service Organizations; The American Legion Post 31 and the Disabled American Veterans Chapter 14, to provide free transportation to veterans in need.

At this time these organizations have purchased prepaid tickets that can be used for local trips only (grocery store, bank, local private doctor, etc.).

How to use this benefit?

You will need to contact our office at 803.283.2469 to obtain a ticket or two depending on if you need a round trip. These tickets do not expire. You will then have to call LARS at 803.285.6956 to schedule your reservation on their vehicle.

We do have a limited quantity of tickets and they will be issued on a first come first serve basis.

Valentines for Veterans

Each year we collect Valentines from our local schools to send them to Dorn VA Hospital. Volunteer Services collects them and distributes them out at the hospital.



Lancaster DAV Van Schedule for January 2016:

Columbia:	Rock Hill:
Wednesday, Jan 6	
Thursday, Jan 7	Friday, Jan 8
Wednesday, Jan 13	
Thursday, Jan 14	Friday, Jan 15
Wednesday, Jan 20	
Thursday, Jan 21	Friday, Jan 22
Wednesday, Jan 27	
Thursday, Jan 28	Friday, Jan 29

Please note that these dates may be subject to change due to volunteer driver availability.

SC Works - Veterans Services

Do you fall in one of the following categories?

- A veteran with a service connected disability (have a percentage from VA)
- A veteran that is homeless or feel that you may be homeless
- A veteran lacking a high school diploma or GED
- A veteran who has been released from incarceration within the last 12 months
- A recently separated service member who has been unemployed for 27 weeks or more in the last 12 months or 18 to 24 years old

One on One Case Management and Individual Employment Plan

- Career/job counseling, local labor market information on jobs and employers in the area
- One on one assistance in tailoring resumes for area jobs
- Help with expanding your job search area and how to search
- Providing referral for jobs, family support, social service, and other community programs

If you would like to make an appointment to meet with a member of the SC Works Staff just call 803-313-7385 or come into a SC Works Office.

Michael E O'Donnell

Disabled Veteran Outreach Program Representative
SC Department of Employment and Workforce—Veteran Services SC Works
803-313-7385—Lancaster
803-328-3881 Ext 110 — Rock Hill
modonnell@dew.sc.gov

SC Works

Are you work ready? Contact Lynda!

Lynda Burke

Veterans Coordinator Catawba/LVER
SCDEW/SCWORKS
705 North White Street
Lancaster SC 29720
803-313-7388 (work)
803-287-5930 (cell)
lburke@dew.sc.gov

SC National Guard

Service Member and Family Care

Brad M. Ware is the Employment Advisor with the SC National Guard.

You may contact him at:
National Guard Armory
126 Airport Road
Rock Hill, SC 29732
Cell—803-288-2635

Email—Brad.m.ware.ctr@mail.mil

Critical Home Repair Program

Habitat for Humanity of Lancaster County has now received a grant for critical home repair for veterans and the elderly. If you are interested in more information or want an application please contact our office.

You can also call 803-283-1203 to speak to someone with Habitat for Humanity of Lancaster County. There are certain eligibility criteria that will need to be met.

Dog Tags

There are 3 easy ways to order your dog tags:

1. TREA Store—www.trea.org
2. Phone in—1-800-338-9337
3. Pick Up—TREA HQ

They are \$5.00 plus tax and shipping per set. The set includes a chain and siliencer. You can add a Red Med Alert Tag for \$1.00.



Direct Deposit

What is the fastest way to enroll or make a change to Direct Deposit? The fastest way is to call 1-800-827-1000. They will be able to change it over the phone. To enroll you will need to know your routing and account number along with the amount that will be deposited. If you are changing direct deposit you will need to know your old routing and account number along with your new information.

Funding Needs for Federal Budget

www.govtrack.us/congress/bills

Congress and the President acted on the funding needs of the entire federal budget before adjournment for the Holiday. The national legislative staff wanted to provide you a synopsis of the funding levels approved for veterans benefits and health care in the omnibus act.

On December 18, Congress passed and the President signed into law H.R. 2029, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2016. This legislation provides the FY 2016 funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), and includes advance appropriations for FY 2017 for most VA health care and mandatory spending programs.

The bill includes almost \$163 billion in total discretionary and mandatory funding for VA for fiscal year 2016. This includes \$91 billion in mandatory funding and \$71 billion in discretionary funding.

Advance Appropriations: The bill includes \$63 billion (\$3 billion less than recommended by the *Independent Budget (IB)*) in fiscal year 2017 advance funding for VA medical care and \$103 billion in fiscal year 2017 advance funding for VA's mandatory programs for compensation and pension.

Medical Programs for FY 2016: The Veterans Health Administration, including its research programs, is funded at \$62 billion (\$2 billion less than recommended by the IB), \$1 billion more than the Administration's requested level and \$5 billion more than fiscal year 2015.

Medical Care Highlights:

Hepatitis C Treatments. - \$1.5 billion for new Hepatitis C treatments.

Women Veterans. - \$5 billion in total health care for women veterans who use the VA health system. This includes \$446 million for gender-specific health care.

Caregivers. -for the family caregivers program, \$605 million (\$50 million more than requested by the Administration).

Vet Centers. - \$258 million to fund readjustment counseling.

Homeless Programs. - \$1.4 billion.

Mental Health. - \$7.5 billion, including \$381 million for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, \$612 million for substance abuse treatment and \$144 million for suicide prevention outreach.

Rural Health. - \$270 million for programs of the Office of Rural Health.

Iraq and Afghanistan War Veterans. -The bill includes funding of \$4.9 billion to treat almost 845,000 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans.

Traumatic Brain Injury. - \$232 million in care for veterans suffering traumatic brain injury or other polytraumatic injuries.

Long-Term Care. - \$7.5 billion for institutional and non-institutional long-term services.

Medical and Prosthetic Research. -The bill includes almost \$631 million, \$42 million more than fiscal year 2015 and \$9 million more than requested by the Administration.

Other:

Claims Processing: The bill includes \$2.7 billion (\$89 million less than recommended by the IB) for claims processing, \$173 million more than last year's level of \$2.53 billion and \$10 million more than the request.

Construction: Major Construction, \$1.24 billion (\$686 million less than recommended by the IB) for major construction projects; for minor construction, \$406 million (\$169 million less than recommended by the IB).

Grants for the Construction of State Veterans Homes: \$120 million (\$80 million less than recommended by the IB).

Information Technology (IT): The bill provides \$4.1 billion (\$158 million more than recommended by the IB) to modernize and sustain VA's information technology systems.

The American Legion

The American Legion meets the first Monday of each month at 7:00pm .

The Mission of the American Legion is to provide service to our Veterans and their families and the communities they serve in.

If you are interested in becoming a member of The American Legion please call 803-283.2394.

Disabled American Veterans

Our meetings are the second Mondays of each month. We meet at the American Legion at 7:00pm. We would like to see all of our members there. If you are interested in being a member of the DAV please let me know. I can be contacted at (803) 285-4081.

Hope you have a great and prosperous month! See you at the meeting!!

Wayne "Hoss" Knight
Commander Chapter 14



The U.S. Department of Treasury, in partnership with the SC State Housing Finance and Development Authority and SC Housing Corp., has made over \$295 million available to help eligible South Carolina homeowners avoid serious first mortgage delinquency and foreclosures.

Qualifications

SC Help is intended to assist borrowers who are facing first mortgage delinquency or possible foreclosure. There is no household income limit, the property must be an owner-occupied primary residence, applicants must have a minimum 24 months homeownership history and applicants do NOT have to be delinquent.

How to Apply

Applicants are encouraged to apply electronically at: www.schelp.com. Applicants without the internet may call 1-855-435-7472, toll free number for assistance. There is NO FEE required at any point during the SC HELP process. Once you have made an appointment with a representative you can meet at the SC Works office on White St, Lancaster.

Fort Lawn Veteran Service Group

Open to all Veterans who want to attend. We meet at the Fort Lawn Community Center the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm. The address is 5554 Main St, Fort Lawn, SC 29714.

If you need more information please contact Jim Gladden at 803-320-3537 or Lynda Burke at 803-287-5930.

Marine Corps League

The Lancaster County Leather-necks—Detachment 1169 — Marine Corps League meets the last Tuesday of each month in our building at 347 Brooklyn Ave at 7:00pm. We welcome all Marines and FMF Corpsmen to join with us.

Billy Helms, Commandant

Veterans of Foreign War

We meet the first Thursday of every month at The American Legion. This meeting is held at 7:00pm. We would love to see all members attend these meeting. If you are interested in becoming a member please contact Tim Catoe, Quartermaster for VFW Post 5936, at 803-285-7199 or 803-320-4675. You can also email him at tim.catoe@comporium.com

Veterans of Foreign War

Indian Land Post 12136

Next meeting is 4th Saturday of the month at 9:30am.
Location: 8083 Charlotte Hwy, Indian Land, SC 29707
Additional Information can be found on our following websites:
Www.indianlandvfw.org or www.facebook.com/indianlandvfw.com
Feel free to contact John Marker—Ph: 704.843.6930

Check Your Rep

How can you check if your representative is accredited with the Office of General Counsel? Just follow these simple steps to check to make sure you are working with an accredited representative:

1. Go to <http://www.va.gov/ogc/apps/accreditation/index.asp>
2. You choose between attorney, claims agent or VSO representative
3. Enter in Last Name and State
4. Click Search
5. Click on your representatives name
6. A list will display showing all accreditations that person has.

If your representative is not listed then they are not accredited with a veterans service organization

About Our Office

This Office is employed by Lancaster County not the VA. The Lancaster County Veterans Affairs Office is an advocate for veterans and/or their surviving dependents to provide the assistance needed in applying for benefits from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and VA Hospitals. The Veterans Affairs Office assists former and present members of the United States Armed Forces and their dependents in preparing claims. Types of benefits include but not limited to: Service-Connected disability and Non-Service Connected pension; death pension benefits; burial; medical care; educational assistance, including vocational rehabilitation; guaranteed home loans; government life insurance and other benefits.

DAV Van

Due to low volunteer drivers we will only go 3 days a week.

If you need to schedule a ride on our DAV van please call 803-283-2469. Currently we are scheduled to go to Columbia on Wednesdays & Thursdays and Rock Hill on Fridays. Please note that we will need a 48 hour notice for you to be scheduled to ride this van. We only pick up veterans if you live on the way to Columbia or Rock Hill. We can only pick up riders that do not have any other way to meet here in the parking lot. We have to coordinate with volunteer drivers.

Want to receive this newsletter by email? Contact
VAOffice@lancastercountysc.net to
be put on the mailing list.



Office Staff

Robin Ghent

- Veteran Affairs Director, Lancaster County
- President, SCACVAO (South Carolina Association of County Veterans Affairs Officers)
- Board member for South Carolina Veteran Advocacy Council
- Board member for South Carolina Veterans Trust Fund
- Legislative Committee member for National Association County Veterans Service Officers

Accredited with:

1. National Association of County Veteran Service Officers
2. South Carolina Division of Veteran Affairs
3. The American Legion
4. Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
5. Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)
6. Vietnam Veterans of America
7. Retired Enlisted Association

**Received the appropriate training to be accredited and to have access to the Federal VA Claims system

Beth Raffaldt

- Deputy Director Veterans Affairs, Lancaster County
- Public Relations Chairperson, SCACVAO (South Carolina Association of County Veterans Affairs Officers)

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1. National Association of County Veteran Service Officers
2. South Carolina Division of Veterans Affairs
3. The American Legion
4. Disabled American Veterans (DAV)
5. Vietnam Veterans of America
6. Retired Enlisted Association
7. Military Order of the Purple Heart

**Received the appropriate training to be accredited and to have access to the Federal VA Claims system

Tiffany King

- Secretary/DAV Van Coordinator for Veterans Affairs, Lancaster County

