



THE DISPATCH

January 2024

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE COLORADO DEPT. OF MILITARY AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

Your DMVA Legislative Agenda

Parker White, DMVA Public Information Officer & Legislative Liaison

On January 10th, the 2024 Colorado State Legislative Session will begin, and we want all of you to know what the DMVA is running at the State Capitol. This year, the DMVA is running 3 legislative items and 5 decision items.

Before we move further, let's make sure we define terms. A *legislative item* is a bill that changes language in state law. These can range anywhere from creating new criminal penalties, to changing property tax laws, to landfill regulations. If it is changing state law, it is likely going to be a *legislative item*.

Decision items are changes to the state budget. Every year, the state budget is passed in a package bill called the *Long Bill*.

Decision items, are new budgetary requests coming from the DMVA that are in the Long Bill, but not otherwise changes in state law.

Legislative Item Request 1: The top legislative priority for the DMVA is our Veteran Service Officer (VSO) Audit Response bill. This piece of legislation was developed in coordination with the Office of the State Auditor and was brought through the Legislative Audit Committee. It makes a series of changes to state law surrounding VSOs. Of note, it requires that all VSOs in the state are accredited, and it ties state Veteran services reimbursement to counties, to whether they have an accredited VSO or not. The bill also restructures the distribution of those payments as an hourly rate. Lastly, it requires that counties provide "prompt and efficient service" to their Veterans. This bill is being run by Senators R. Pelton (R) and Fields (D), and Representatives Lindstedt (D) and Frizzel (R).

Legislative Item 2: The second priority for the DMVA is Military and Civilian Law Enforcement Eligibility. This bill has come as a result of a collaboration between the Colorado Peace Officer Standards and Training Board (POST) and the DMVA. It aims to remove a barrier in state law that precludes the POST Board from recognizing Military Police training when it comes to granting Colorado

peace officer certificates. This bill has been endorsed by the County Sheriffs of Colorado and the Colorado Association of Chiefs of Police, as well as the Attorney General. It is sponsored by Representatives Armagost (R) and Martinez (D), as well as Senator Hinrichsen (D).

Legislative Item 3: The third legislative item for DMVA is establishing a Women Veterans Day. Women Veterans experience different struggles compared to their male counterparts. To be established June 12th, Women Veterans Day will provide a platform for Women Veterans issues to be highlighted across the state.

Decision Item 1: The DMVA is requesting \$500,000 in funds for the Colorado National Guard to provide state funded recruiting and retention bonuses. The Colorado National Guard is experiencing critically low-end strength. These bonuses were effective in other states at combating factors that have led to poor recruiting and retention.

Decision Item 2: The DMVA is requesting an increase to the G9 (Construction and Facilities Maintenance) budget to combat increases in cost due to inflation.

Decision Item 3: The DMVA is requesting an additional full-time employee (FTE) to fall under the Director of Strategic Planning. This position will serve as the Training Officer for the DMVA and will work to coordinate required training for staff across the state.

Decision Item 4: The DMVA is requesting a \$250,000 increase in spending authority for the Veterans Trust Fund. Currently, the Division of Veterans Affairs is unable to spend a buildup of unused funds. This increase in spending authority will allow the Division of Veterans Affairs to execute more grants and will pay down the excess amount of capital currently in the fund.

Decision Item 5: Lastly, the DMVA is requesting 1.5 FTE authority to build out a JROTC Liaison program. Currently, there is no state touchpoint into K-12 JROTC and Youth Programs. This position will allow the DMVA to develop relationships and open lines of communications between the state of Colorado and these crucial youth development programs.

Unparalleled service

Parker White, DMVA Public Information Officer & Legislative Liaison

On Thursday, January 4th, 2024, Aaron Henke finished his day at work on Buckley and drove home, just like he had for the last 27 years. Only this time, after nearly three decades of service to the DMVA, Aaron had retired from the DMVA and was making that drive for the last time.

Aaron was born in Iowa and came to Colorado in 1983 where he grew up in Littleton. During his sophomore year of high school, in 1993, he began working seasonally in the Buckley summer program. He went on to work at Buckley during the summers of both his sophomore and junior year. In August of 1997, he became a full-time employee of the DMVA and has been with the DMVA ever since.



Aaron (pictured back center), as a junior in high school, with the Buckley summer program in 1993. Also present is former TAG, Major General Mason Whitney, (pictured back right), who at the time was serving as the commander of the 140th Wing.

“Those programs were perfect for me in the summer,” recalls Aaron. “The DMVA just worked for me as a person.”

Aaron started his DMVA career in the Buckley Roads and Grounds Shop from August 1997 to 2001. From there he jumped to the Mechanical Shop where he worked from 2001 to 2019 in welding, plumbing, and fire systems. In 2019, he took over as the shop supervisor, where he remained until his retirement from the DMVA.

“It’s the people that I work with out here that kept me coming back,” says Henke. “It has always been an honor to work for the military and the 140th.”

Aaron has recently taken a position at the Colorado Department of Human Services supervising a plumbing shop of six licensed plumbers and a pipefitter. He will be working across the state on hospitals, shelters, and long-term care facilities.

“I’m a little sad to be moving on, a chapter is ending, a new chapter is starting. But I owe a lot to this place. I’ve learned a lot, I’ve grown up a lot with the DMVA,” says Aaron.

Outside of work Aaron still lives in Littleton. He is a family man, and focuses on raising his three children, a 13-year-old, a 5-year-old, and a 3-year-old. They’re an active bunch says Aaron, as he describes his children playing soccer, football, swimming, ice skating, and t-ball; with basketball and hockey about to be added to that list.

“My kids are my passion and I like to help out their coaches when I can,” he says.

When asked if there was anything he wanted to say as went out the door onto his next adventure, Aaron just said, “A big thank you to the DMVA as a whole. It’s been a privilege to work for such a great department.”

Aaron thank you for your years of service to the DMVA, the 140th Wing, and the people of Colorado. We have been honored to have you with us for as long as you were. We wish you the best of luck in your future endeavors and please know that you will always have a home here.

Hires:

Jack Andrade, Transportation Maintenance, Buckley AFB, 10/16/2023

Samuel Vanzant, CE Project Manager I, CFMO, 10/16/2023

Hanna NikiFarava, CE Project Manager I, CFMO, 10/30/2023

Bill Mercer, Transportation Maintenance, Buckley AFB 11/01/2023

Viorel Cioranu, Equipment Mechanic, Buckley AFB, 11/06/2023

Mark Chamberlain, Structural Trades II, Ft. Carson, 11/06/2023

Elizabeth Mondo, Veterans Service Officer, Veterans Affairs, 11/20/2023

April Zarzuela, Budget Analyst, Executive Director's Office, 11/27/2023

Howard Bartee, Veterans Service Officer, Veterans Affairs, 12/04/2023

Maximilien Goligosky, Veterans Service Officer, Veterans Affairs, 12/04/2023

Ken Balltrip, Air National Guard Patrol Officer, Space Force Greeley, 01/01/2023

Promotions:

Ralph Sandoval, Grounds and Nursery III, Veterans Cemetery, 10/01/2023

Drew Stem, Liaison III, Veterans Affairs, 10/16/2023

Emiliano Barela, Purchasing Director, Executive Director's Office, 11/13/2023

Selina Jiminez, Accounting Technician, Executive Director's Office, 11/13/2023

Glen Marciniak, Veterans Affairs, 01/01/2024

Goodbyes:

Clarence Schlenz, Transportation Maintenance I, Buckley AFB, 10/20/2023

Brady White, Environmental Protection Specialist, CFMO, 11/28/2023

Joe Kisslan (Retiring), Structural Trades II, Ft. Carson, 12/31/2023

Transfers:

Eric Moncibais, transferring to a new position within the Division of Veterans Affairs, 01/01/2024

HR Updates

Kronos:

Supervisors, when approving timesheets, the top three things you need to look at when reviewing

Direct Report timesheets are:

1. Do they have 40 hours for each week?
2. Do they have 2 hours of leave to make whole when there is a holiday (if on the 4x10 schedule)?
3. Did you approve the timesheet for direct reports (turns green)?

Employees, when reviewing your timesheet prior to approving your own timesheet (this is the same as signing a timesheet):

1. Do you have 40 hours for each week?
2. Are your holidays input into the system?
3. Did you click approve and save the timesheet?

The New Step Pay Placement Website:

As you may know, the State is looking at placing employees into a step based on their time spent in a singular class series. If you have been working in a singular class series for many years, you may be eligible for a pay adjustment on July 1. If you would like to check where your salary MIGHT be on July 1 or just want to learn a bit more about this pay placement, please

visit: <https://dhr.colorado.gov/state-hr-professionals/compensation/2024-step-pay-program-for-state-of-colorado-employees>.

FAMLI:

The new Family Medical Leave Insurance program is coming! It will become available to employees on January 1, 2023 as needed. This is an insurance program in the event an employee needs to be away from work for a medical situation designed to protect your income (Administered by CDLE, not DMVA or HR).

Past Events

Division of Veteran Affairs:

- The Adjutant General of Colorado U.S. Army Brig. Gen. Laura Clellan hosted Gold Star families and families of deployed CONG members and Gold Star Families in separate events Dec. 16 at the Boettcher Mansion in Denver

- Division of Veterans Affairs Director David Callahan has retired from the DMVA. We thank him for his years of service to Colorado Veterans.

Civil Air Patrol:

- The Colorado Wing of the Civil Air Patrol's Winter encampment occurred from Dec 28th to Jan 3rd.

CO National Guard:

- Director of the Joint Staff U.S. Air Force Brig. Gen. Michael Bruno's Senior Leader Visit to Slovenia occurred Dec. 9-13.

- An Eager Lion 24 Master Scenario Events List occurred in Florida Dec. 11-15.

Upcoming Events

Division of Veteran Affairs:

- Military Day at the Colorado State Capitol will occur on Feb 9th. Veteran Service Organizations, Veteran friendly companies, and military recruiters will be present at the Capitol all day long!

Civil Air Patrol:

- Jan 14th, the Colorado Wing Civil Air Patrol Combat Digital Simulator semi-finals will take place at Joint Force Headquarters from 0800 – 1200.

CO National Guard:

- U.S. Air Force Maj. Michelle Krabbenhoft will speak to an audience of 50 veterans at the Hilltop Veterans Club in Aurora about Colorado's State Partnership Program Jan. 8

- The COARNG's and COANG's Color Guards will participate in the opening day of the Colorado General Assembly Jan. 10, 2024, at the State Capitol.

