STATE OF CALIFORNIA EDMUND G. BROWN, JR., Governor

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

April 3, 2012 2012 APR 13 A 10:21

William O'Brien, Chair
Stanislaus County Board of Supervisors
1010 Tenth Street, Suite 6500
Modesto, CA 95354

The Honorable William O'Brien:

During the period of July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011, your County Veterans Service Officer (CVSO), Ms. Carolyn Hebenstreich, obtained new and increased monthly cash benefits from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (USDVA), in the amount of $568,371. On an annualized basis, this amounts to more than $6,820,452 in new benefit payments. In addition, Ms. Hebenstreich obtained $6,481,573 in one-time benefits, which consists of single and retro-active payments received by veterans or their dependents. Studies have shown that monies spent in a community could turn over between 3 to 7 times, which is a fairly accurate measure of the spending impact on a community. Using the conservative multiplier of 3, this equates to a spending impact of at least $20,461,356 from the annualized monthly cash benefits and $19,444,719 from the one-time benefits received.

In addition to the fact that your veterans' community received the above cash benefits, claim advocacy services provided by Ms. Hebenstreich to obtain and maintain federal monetary benefits have resulted in savings to your county based on Ms. Hebenstreich's active participation in the State Mandated Welfare Referral Program. This program requires your CVSO to verify and make benefit entitlement determinations on all public assistance referrals (i.e., GA/FR, CalWORKS, Food Stamps, and Medi-Cal) received from your County Welfare Department. Included in the totals above is $347,280 in annualized monthly benefits and $6,402,300 in one-time benefits received by individuals who had applied for public assistance grants. In addition, your CVSO verified $95,223 in prior monthly USDVA monetary benefits being received by public assistance and Medi-Cal applicants, which on an annualized basis represents $1,142,676. Your CVSO also assisted veterans' families in their application for the College Tuition Fee Waiver program. This resulted in either the veterans or their families saving $878,778 in tuition and fees at California state colleges and universities.

I hope you will consider this valuable information when addressing the needs of a properly funded and fully supported CVSO. With a net county cost of less than $270,000, your CVSO, once again, remains one of the few revenue-producing offices in the county. In addition, your county veteran population deserves and has earned the right to continued high quality representation in veterans' affairs.

If further assistance is needed in maintaining your CVSO's services, please feel free to contact Mr. Mark Lennon, Deputy Secretary for Administration at: (916) 653-2573.

Sincerely,

PETER J. GRAVETT
Major General (Retired)
Secretary

Cc: County Veteran Service Office
VSD File