

House Republican Press Release

July 23, 2007
Press Office: 860-240-8700

Reps Hamzy, Burns: Vet Express Van Improves Access to Services for CT Veterans

Department of Veterans Affairs' Vehicle Makes it Convenient for Vets to Sign Up for Benefits



Veterans who want to learn more about the wide array of state and federal benefits and programs available to them could soon find the help they need in a nearby parking lot, state Representatives William A. Hamzy and Ron Burns said today.

It is the 'Vet Express,' a \$75,000 van recently acquired by the state Department of Veterans' Affairs (D. V. A.) that will be visiting towns and cities throughout the state seeking out veterans who may be eligible for a variety of benefits and programs, the legislators said.

"The Vet Express is a unique and valuable new service that will give thousands of veterans around the state who qualify for benefits a convenient and easy way to sign up for them," said Representative Hamzy, R-78th District. "If you are a veteran who has never found the time to look into the hundreds of programs the state and federal governments have created over the years, I urge you to visit the Vet Express when it comes to town. You may be pleasantly surprised to find you are eligible for a benefit you need but did not know was available."

"Many veterans who qualify for benefits have never taken advantage of them," said Representative Burns, R-77th District. "For most, family and career responsibilities have always come first, leaving little free time to spend leafing through government publications to determine which programs they qualify for. Others may believe their incomes disqualify them for most benefits and never consider looking into the programs at all. When the Vet Express van comes to town, I would strongly recommend that all local veterans set aside a few minutes to discuss their options with a D. V. A. service officer. It won't take much time and it could be of significant value to you and your family."

The van is equipped with computers and printers that enable D. V. A. veteran service officers to process claims for veterans' benefits on the spot. The service officers also will provide general information about programs and benefits and assist veterans in applying for them.

The van is handicapped-accessible and has two work stations as well as a waiting area. The Vet Express will be visiting locations such as town halls, libraries, state facilities and shopping centers to provide direct service to veterans. Appointments are not necessary.

In addition to its monthly schedule of visits to towns throughout the state, organizations can request the Vet Express for events expected to attract large groups of veterans. Organizations interested in scheduling the Vet Express should contact the D. V. A. Community Affairs Office at (860) 721-5826 or go to www.ct.gov/ctva and click on Vet Express.

Area veterans also can get information and assistance in signing up for benefits from a D. V. A. veteran service officer who visits Bristol every month. The service officer holds outreach sessions on the first Tuesday of every month from 1:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the American Legion Hall located at 22 Hooker Court, Bristol, the legislators said.