



FROM THE OFFICE OF GOVERNOR DAVE HEINEMAN

NEWS RELEASE

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Gov. Heineman Announces Kearney as Location of Central Nebraska Veterans Home

(Lincoln, Neb.) Gov. Dave Heineman today announced Kearney as the new location of the Central Nebraska Veterans Home. Kearney was chosen through a thorough and open bidding process to replace the current 125-year-old Grand Island Veterans Home.

"This was not an easy decision," said Gov. Heineman. "We have four outstanding communities who submitted outstanding proposals. The proposals were financially stronger and better than we anticipated. I appreciate that each community focused on their strengths and what was best for veterans."

After the thorough review process, the Site Selection Committee recommended Kearney based on several factors of their comprehensive proposal including the financial proposal; the workforce development plan; and subsidized electrical, water and sewer rates and refuse discounts. Additional factors include no cost equipment such as compactors; the infrastructure and environmental proposals; the physical site; and their outstanding program enhancements which include the woodshop, kiln, library, chapel, landscaping, a veterans memorial, and transportation.

"The Kearney application was rated highest of the four quality applications we received," said John Hilgert, Director of the Division of Veterans Homes and Veterans Affairs. "Their application was comprehensive and responsive to all categories listed in the Request for Statement of Interest and Offer."

A request for statement of interest and offer was released on April 29 and four communities sent an offer. Those were North Platte, Kearney, Hastings and Grand Island. The site selection committee was made up of Carlos Castillo, Director, Department of Administrative Services; Catherine Lang, Director, Nebraska Department of Economic Development and Labor; and John Hilgert, Director, Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs and Director, Division of Veterans Homes within the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

The committee met with those interested in making an offer on May 10. The deadline for receipt of written questions and clarifications was May 17 with a response deadline of May 23. Final offers were due by June 11 and site visits by the committee were conducted on June 13 and 14.

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Nine principal categories were evaluated and each category was assigned a score based on an overall model of 1200 points from nine categories. Those categories include physical factors, utilities and infrastructure, cultural factors, environmental factors, community services, regulatory factors, workforce factors, community support factors and program enhancements. Kearney received a score of 1033, Hastings 977, Grand Island 889 and North Platte 855.

Gov. Heineman signed LB 198 into law on May 25, allowing the appropriation of funds for capital construction and property acquisition. In compliance with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Community Living Communities current standards, one 225-bed long-term care facility will be constructed for use by veterans. The site must be located no farther than a two hour driving distance from the existing Grand Island Veterans Home, nor within a two hour driving distance of the other three existing Nebraska Veterans Homes located in Scottsbluff, Norfolk and Bellevue.

Additionally, The Schemmer Associates, whose home office is in Omaha was hired as consultants to aid in the selection process. Their cost was approximately \$176,000 which included support of the site selection process and the submission of the application to the USVA which includes schematic and budgeting expenses. They helped valuate and score the different sites from a professional engineering viewpoint. This team assisted with veterans home site selection for the Eastern Nebraska Veterans Home as well as planning and design projects including Iowa Veterans Home Master Plan Implementation in Marshalltown, IA; Madonna Manor (A Franciscan Living Community) in Villa Hills KY; Villa St. Benedict Continuing Care Retirement Community in Lisle IL; Immanuel Communities Lakeside Village Addition in Omaha; and Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society in Beatrice NE.

In the new Central Nebraska Veterans Home, the resident rooms will be distributed among five services – Long-Term Care, Medically Complex, Dementia, Hospice, and Assisted Living in households of 12-15 members. The cost of the budgeted project is \$121 million with an approximate cost of \$102 million for the facility. The project funded by a federal and state match and would employ over 350 fulltime positions.

“I know I speak for every Nebraskan when I say how very proud we are of our military personnel and our veterans. We want to thank the staff and leadership of the Grand Island Veterans Home for the manner in which they take care of our veterans, and I hope that the staff and leadership at the current home will continue to be part of the new Central Nebraska Veterans Home in Kearney,” said Gov. Heineman.

All four proposals and the scoring will be available online at www.cnvh.nebraska.gov.

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