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CITY OF KEARNEY **PRESS RELEASE** ***For Immediate Release***

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New “Model” Room Unveiled at Grand Island Veterans’ Home

After this week, members of the Grand Island Veterans’ Home will have a much better idea of what their living areas will be like when the new Central Nebraska Veterans’ Home opens in Kearney in 2018.

This is thanks to Wilkins Architecture Design Planning of Kearney who designed a life sized “model room,” construction management students at the University of Nebraska – Kearney, who built the room for the veterans, and others who came forward to donate supplies and labor. “This says so much about the can-do attitude of Kearney and our support for the veterans who will make their home here in a few years”, said City Manager Michael Morgan.

The room was moved from Kearney to Grand Island this week, where it is being fitted with amenities so the veterans will be able to envision themselves in their new home when it is completed. “This is exciting and will help make the new home real for our members”, said John Hilgert, Director of the Department of Health and Human Services’ Division of Veterans’ Homes.

The model includes a bedroom/living area of 220 square feet, a bathroom of 68 square feet, and closet space of 12 square feet. Wilkins Architecture Design Planning (Wilkins ADP) began drawing plans for the model after receiving initial approval from the U.S. Dept. of Veterans Affairs in December 2014.

The partnership with University of Nebraska at Kearney construction management students began in earnest in February 2015 when construction began, led by faculty Nathan Barry, PhD.; Dale Porter and Eric Holt, all assistant professors at UNK. The students worked on framing of floor, walls, and roof; installation of exterior siding; shingling the roof; and logistics of transportation.

The remaining interior finish of the model was unable to be completed by students during the summer so in late May Wilkins ADP contracted Andy Spracklen, owner of Spracklen Built, to complete the model. Kali Eklund and Wes Seals of Wilkins ADP worked with Spracklen Built to get materials finalized, ordered, and delivered to the project site on UNK’s campus. Spracklen Built, along with their hired subcontractors, completed the drywall, electrical, door and frame installation, ceiling, painting, bathroom tile installation, cabinetry installation, and coordinated moving the model to the Grand Island Veterans’ Home.

Footings and a ramp were installed at the Grand Island Veterans' Home to make access to the room easier.

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