



**Hello fellow Routt County Veterans,**

**APR2016 ISSUE**

As the newly appointed Veterans Service Officer for Routt County for going on 5 months already I have had the pleasure of meeting over 150 veterans face to face to date and hope to meet many more of you in the near future. My duty is to assist veterans with completing applications for VA healthcare and many other veteran benefits, arranging transportation to and from VA facilities, exploring employment opportunities for vets, and providing information for veteran-owned businesses. In addition to serving all the veterans I have met to date with their benefits needs I have set out to accomplish many additional goals in my new position.

- Continue learning and finessing the state processes required to perform my duty
- Take over management of veteran transportation admin from Jim Stanko (done)
- Scan all documents in my office and save them digitally to secure HIPPA server (done)
- Write the first ever Veterans Assistance Grant and submit (done)
- Set up Routt County Veterans Facebook page and post regularly (done)
- Set up email database of veterans and use to PUSH information (in progress)
- Write and send out via email and post to county website quarterly newsletter (done)
- Update Veterans section of county website and add new pages and functionality (done)
- Set up outreach schedule for Hayden and Oak Creek regions of Routt (in progress)
- Set up monthly coffee or lunch and social w/ veterans at Casey's Pond (in progress)
- Meet with Steamboat Chamber to work out enhancements to the Veteran Owned Business page and enhance its visibility (in progress)
- Receive mentoring from Jim Stanko and attend state and national meetings
- Help organize and run veteran related events and fundraisers for the community

One of my important goals this year is to continue to grow the email and mobile phone database with all the veterans of Routt County so that I can streamline communication to a large audience in the most efficient and cost effective manner using technology. I realize that some veterans of Routt are "OFF THE GRID" and choose to be. My only hope is that I am able to connect with each and every one of you at some point in time. Please call me or email me at [nbreitung@co.routt.co.us](mailto:nbreitung@co.routt.co.us) to set up an appointment with me and please help pass on my contact info to other fellow veterans young and old in Routt County.

## **TOPICS THIS QUARTER:**

### **HEALTHCARE – OPERATION TOMODACHI THE NEW AGENT ORANGE**

Operation Tomodachi was the military mission that provided assistance following the devastating March 11, 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan. These unfortunate events caused severe damage to the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station, which resulted in the release of radiation into the environment. Over the past couple years there have been a growing number of cases appearing of military members serving on the ships and in the

proximity getting cancer, and other severe health issues as a result of their exposure. See recent article:

<http://www.stripes.com/16-us-ships-that-aided-in-operation-tomodachi-still-contaminated-with-radiation-1.399094>

See the list of ships exposed: (click on blue FLEET DOSE) icon

<https://registry.csd.disa.mil/registryWeb/Registry/OperationTomodachi/DisplayEstimatedAreaDoses.do>

Lawsuit related to this Fukushima exposure was won but there is a heavy price to pay:

<http://ennews.com/sailors-won-major-battle-lawsuit-fukushima-exposures-200-people-navy-marines-leukemia-organs-removed-brain-tumors-cancer-blindness-govt-fukushima-terrible-tragedy-navy-threat-didnt-very-interes>

If you served on or in proximity to any of these ships or location and have symptoms related to radiation exposure, you are eligible to file for a disability claim. Please pass on this information to recent navy members that have separated from service.

## EMPLOYMENT - EMPLOYING VETERANS & VETERAN OWNED BUSINESSES



Xcel Energy is seeking military veterans for employment in all their service areas to include Hayden Station. Ben Fowke, CEO and chairman for Xcel Energy, is passionate about hiring veterans. Ben Fowke realizes that with about half of the energy workforce being eligible to retire in the next 10 years, that veterans have the perfect skills to bring to the company.

Please visit Xcel Energy's Veterans Page to learn more about the military/veteran programs the company offers and to create a profile with the Veteran General Interest Posting to get connected with the veteran recruiter. <http://www.xcelenergy.com/Company/Careers/Veterans>

See some of the local and regional job openings at Xcel Energy at:

<https://jobs.xcelenergy.com/search?q=&q2=&title=&location=hayden&date=>. There are an additional 32 positions throughout Colorado:

<https://jobs.xcelenergy.com/search?q=&q2=&title=&location=co&date=>. If you are interested in these positions you may reach out directly to Lacey Golonka, Veteran and Diversity Recruiter/Consultant at Xcel Energy – Phone: 303-294-2679, email: [lacey.golonka@xcelenergy.com](mailto:lacey.golonka@xcelenergy.com).



Another great resource is the Colorado Workforce Center here in Steamboat Springs located at 425 Anglers Drive. They too are putting veterans at the forefront in order to help them find employment in Routt County and beyond. See jobs at: [www.connectingcolorado.com](http://www.connectingcolorado.com)

## EDUCATION – GI BILL UPDATES & MORE



Colorado Mountain College in Steamboat Springs has hired a new Veterans Liason. His name is Kenneth Gedelian and he served in the US Navy on active duty for 8 years. He is onboard with CMC to help get new college students help with getting registered at the college using their G.I. Bill and any other benefits related to getting an

education. I am working with Kenneth to help young veterans with any other military benefits or questions they may have. If you know of a veteran of any age wishing to get enrolled at the college please contact Kenneth at [kegedelian@mail.coloradomtn.edu](mailto:kegedelian@mail.coloradomtn.edu)

## TRANSPORTATION – TRANSPORTING VETS TO VA HOSPITALS FROM MOUNTAIN REGION



In February a small group of both veterans and local transportation companies had an initial conversation regarding transportation for veterans to remote VA facilities. One of the members on the committee was Susan Juergensmeier from the Northwest Colorado Council of Governments. She presented information about <http://mtnride.org/routt-county-transportation/> which is a newly formed organization of NCCG. Mountain

Ride is an organization managed by Northwest Colorado Council of Governments. The Mountain Ride One call/ one click center was founded to coordinate, manage, consolidate, educate, promote, enhance, and facilitate a seamless access to transportation services for the veteran, people with disabilities, older adult, and economically disadvantaged adult populations in the geographic region composed Garfield, Pitkin, Eagle, Summit, Grand, Jackson, and Routt Counties. Mountain Ride does NOT own transportation vehicles, they simply coordinate with other companies that do. They currently only list the Steamboat Transit that goes from Steamboat to Craig. So they DO NOT cover trips to Grand Junction, Denver or Fort Collins VA's.

There is money to be spent on transportation. If you are a Routt County veteran needing transportation to either Grand Junction or Denver VA hospital or clinic in Craig please complete the online request form. You may find information, the forms that need to be completed and the request form at: <http://co.routt.co.us/index.aspx?NID=507>

## TOPICS OF INTEREST TO YOU

See the current March update on current Bills of interest to Veterans that were introduced as of January 25, 2016 for the state of Colorado:

<http://www.co.routt.co.us/DocumentCenter/View/4728>

Please email me any specific topics of interest to you and I will do my best to uncover the latest up to date information possible of your topic and include it in upcoming issues of my newsletter.