



For Immediate Release
November 16, 2011

Ohio Veterans Bonus Has Impact on Local Communities

COLUMBUS – Ohio’s resident veterans of the Persian Gulf, Iraq and Afghanistan eras have been paid over \$33.1 million so far, with more to come as additional veterans apply. The money may be used for any purpose, which has likely benefited the local communities where veterans live.

For bonuses awarded through October 31, 4,543 veterans and family members in Franklin County have been paid more than \$3.6 million. Five other counties in the state also topped the million mark in bonus dollars paid. So far, a total of 42,149 Ohio veterans and family members have received a bonus payment.

In addition, more than \$8.1 million has been paid to 7,389 Ohio resident service members who are currently serving outside Ohio.

“Our veterans have earned this bonus, and the money is theirs to spend however they need or want to do that,” said Tom Moe, Director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services. “They may spend it to pay down bills or they may spend it on something they want, but it’s safe to say that a significant amount of what they get is going back into their local economies.”

The other counties where claims paid exceeded \$1 million are:

- Cuyahoga, 3,040 claims for over \$2.3 million;
- Hamilton, 1,898 claims exceeding \$1.5 million;
- Montgomery, 2,435 claims for more than \$1.7 million;
- Stark, 1,418 claims for over \$1.1 million;
- Summit, 1,877 claims for more than \$1.5 million

A link to a by-county breakdown of bonuses paid is appended to this release.

Although there is no survey data on veteran spending, a 2010 survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor concluded that the average American spent about 22

percent of their pre-tax income that year on consumer purchases. This spending included food, both at home and away from home, apparel and services, and entertainment. If healthcare, transportation, and personal insurance were included, the percentage rose to roughly 48 percent of pre-tax income.

The bonus is available to veterans who served more than 90 days active duty, not for training, during the periods of the Persian Gulf War and the conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. For the Persian Gulf, the period is from August 2, 1990 through March 3, 1991; for Afghanistan, from October 7, 2001 through a date to be determined by the President, and for Iraq, from March 19, 2003 and also through a to-be-determined date. Payment can be received for active duty service anywhere in the world during these periods, but is higher for veterans who served in the Persian Gulf or in Afghanistan or Iraq. Eligible veterans must have been Ohio residents at the time of their entry into the service, and must be Ohio residents currently.

The bonus pays \$100 a month to veterans who served in the Persian Gulf theater, or in the countries of Afghanistan or Iraq, up to a maximum of \$1,000. For veterans who served elsewhere, the payment is \$50 a month up to a \$500 maximum. Veterans medically discharged as a result of combat service can receive \$1,000, regardless of how much time they spent in combat, plus up to \$500 for months of service elsewhere. Family members of those killed in action or who died from disease as a result of their in-theater service can receive a bonus of \$5,000 plus whatever the service member was eligible for, up to a total of \$6,500. The Ohio Veterans Bonus is not taxed by either the federal government or the state.

Veterans needing more information or who want to apply can call toll-free to 1-877-OHIO VET (1-877-644-6838) option 2, visit www.veteransbonus.ohio.gov, or visit any county veterans service office (see www.dvs.ohio.gov for an interactive map of the county offices). The department also provides information about the bonus through its social media.

The Ohio Veterans Bonus continues a tradition of bonuses to reward Ohio veterans that dates back to the Civil War; however, these other war bonuses are now closed. Ohio voters overwhelmingly approved the current bonus, which is funded by the sale of bonds, in November 2009. The program was formally launched in August 2010.

-30-

Media needing more information, contact - Mike McKinney at 614-728-0235 or Michael.mckinney@dvs.ohio.gov.

By-county Ohio Veterans Bonus data is at:
http://dvs.ohio.gov/Portals/0/library/odvs/news/archive/2011/Bonus_Data_by_County.pdf