



For Immediate Release
November 15, 2012

Ohio Veterans Home Receives \$798,987 State Cemetery Grant

SANDUSKY -- The Ohio Veterans Home-Sandusky will be the recipient of a \$798,987 grant check for cemetery improvements at a ceremony scheduled for 11 a.m. November 20 at the Home. The grant, announced by Secretary Eric K. Shinseki of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), provides for 100 percent of the allowable costs associated with the improvement and maintenance of the Ohio Veterans Home Cemetery.

"We're very thankful to receive this grant," said Rick Hatcher, Superintendent of the Ohio Veterans Homes. "Many of our residents and families choose our cemetery as a final resting place, and this will help us make it one that's worthy of the service given by the generations of veterans who are buried there."

"Our veterans' cemeteries are places of honor and respect," said Tom Moe, Director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services. "This cemetery holds the mortal remains of our earliest residents, the veterans of the Civil War, right up to many of our residents that we've lost this year. This grant helps us preserve the cemetery as an appropriate memorial for the veterans of today and the future."

The project will improve the cemetery by replacing, realigning and cleaning the headstones; maintaining the turf; and filling in and replacing turf where needed in low spots throughout the cemetery due to poor drainage. Several nearly-illegible headstones will be replaced. Any headstones that crack or break during the project will also be replaced. The contract for the work was awarded to Hoty Enterprises of Sandusky. The actual work within the cemetery will be performed by Avatara Services LLC, a service-disabled veteran-owned business in Asheville, North Carolina.

Work is expected to start on or around November 19, 2012 with tree removal; followed by an assessment on or around November 26 of the total scope of work to be done. Improvements to the headstones and turf are scheduled to begin the second week in March

2013, weather permitting. From that point, the project is expected to take approximately 90 days for the entire work to be completed.

VA's Veterans Cemetery Grants Program is designed to complement the VA's 131 national cemeteries across the country by funding improvements to state veterans' cemeteries. Since 1980, the program has awarded grants totaling more than \$483 million to establish, expand, improve, operate and maintain 87 veterans cemeteries in 41 states and territories including tribal trust lands, Guam, and Saipan. These state cemeteries provided nearly 29,000 burials in 2011.

The Ohio Veterans Homes are state-operated nursing homes for eligible Ohio veterans and are located in Sandusky and Georgetown. To qualify for admission, veterans must have served during a declared war or military conflict, must have been honorably discharged from the U.S. military and must have been Ohio residents for at least one year during his or her lifetime. The veteran must be infirm or disabled and incapable of earning a living. Independent living in a domiciliary setting is available in Sandusky.

For more information about the Homes, call (866) OHIO-VET (866-644-6838) toll free, local (419) 625-2454, ext. 1231 or 1237, or visit http://dvs.ohio.gov/veterans_homes/admission_information.aspx. County veterans service offices in every county can also assist in the process of applying for admission to the Homes and other veterans' benefits. For contact information, call (877) OHIO-VET (877-644-6838) toll free, or see the map at www.ohiovet.gov.

-30-

For more information, contact - Mike McKinney at 614-728-0235 and Michael.mckinney@dvs.ohio.gov, or Karen Kish at 614-752-8941 and Karen.kish@dvs.ohio.gov