

PARK COUNTY VETERAN SERVICES



SERVING THOSE WHO SERVED

Park County has two Veterans Service Officers



James Pickart D.V.M.
U.S. Marine Corps 1968-1974
U.S. Army 2002-2011



Jeremiah (Jay) Pedrie
U.S. Airforce 2002-2006

OUR MISSION



TO ASSIST THE VETERANS OF PARK COUNTY AND THEIR DEPENDENTS IN OBTAINING THE BENEFITS THAT THEY EARNED THROUGH THEIR MILITARY SERVICE.

TO ACT AS A CONDUIT FOR PROGRAMS BOTH GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL THAT MAY ASSIST PARK COUNTY'S VETERANS WITH THEIR LIVING SITUATION.

What Does a Veterans Service Officer do?

Veteran

- Compensation for service connected injuries
- Pensions for low income
- Educational Benefits – Vocational Rehabilitation, GI Bill, Post 9/11
- Records, Discharges, Medals, Corrections of Records, Locating Records
- State Veterans Nursing Homes
- VA Home Loans

Dependent

- Dependents Indemnity Compensation (DIC) for Survivors
- Chapter 35 Dependents Educational Assistance
- Survivor's Pension (Widow's Pension)
- Assist Veteran's Spouse with Burial Allowances, Headstones, Cemeteries

Additional VSO duties for Park County

- Peer Counseling
- Financial management (through FHI)
- Outreach in multiple different fashions
- Assist numerous agencies in veteran related situations:
 - Park Co. Judicial (Veterans Court)
 - Adult Protection and Child Protection Services
- DHS emergency management (DHS EM)
- Assistance with and refer to other agencies located within and outside of Park County.

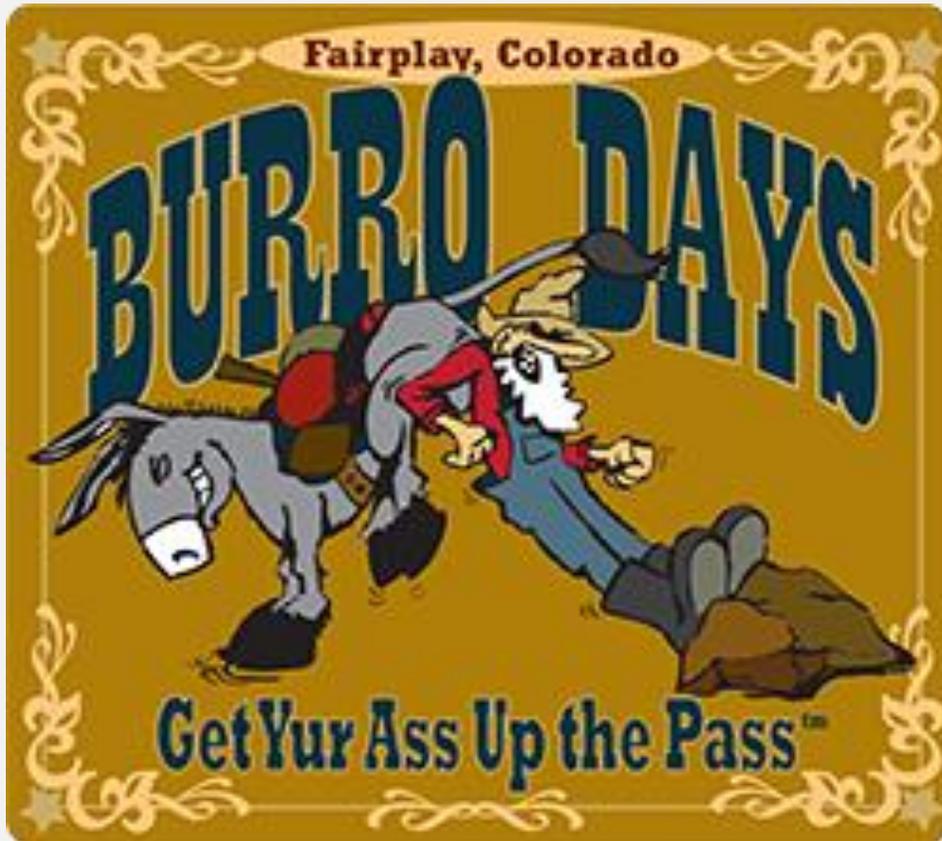


OUTREACH

- Campground visits to meet homeless veterans and provide emergency food
- VOA (Volunteers of America) monthly joint outreach assisting homeless veterans
- Presence in smaller communities for over 9 years (Guffey, Lake George, Hartsel)
- Home visits for veterans and spouses with disabilities.



OUTREACH CONTINUED



- Bailey Days
- Burro Days
- Guffey/Lake George Veteran meetings as needed.
- Shawnee VFW breakfast
- MRC Veterans Rendezvous
- Senior Coalition
- Memorial Day events
- Meet and brief Congressional members

Case Management



- ▶ Park County has 1800+ Veterans (Believed to be closer to 2500)
- ▶ Current Caseload is 1000+ veterans and dependents
- ▶ 2017 Caseload was around 500 veterans.
- ▶ 2014 VSO's Managed 330 Veteran files.

VETERANS RESOURCES IN PARK CO.

- Park County Veterans Service Officers
- Conifer Counseling
- Mountain Resource Center (MRC)
- Family Care Center
- Warrior Tree Counseling
- Healing Waters
- Volunteers of America, homeless veterans program
- **National Veteran Legal Services Program (NVLSP)**
- American Legion Riders Post 172
- The Middle Way Horse Sanctuary Veterans assistance/MH program

Special Thanks

- **American Legion Riders Post 172**
- Pres. AJ Taylor (USN)
- V.P. Harry (Drew) McFarland (Army)
 - Over the last 2 yrs I have leaned on AJ and Drew to assist some veterans in need. Every single time they go above and beyond to enrich these Veterans lives. Distributing food, transportation, firewood etc. They are the true spirit of Veterans helping Veterans.
- **Warrior Tree Counselling**
- Alison Melson, LPC, CCTP
 - Alison has been invaluable to the Park Co. Veteran's community. Numerous veterans use her services to gain a much higher quality of life. I have referred Veterans on an urgent need, and she has always provided quick, effective care.

Veterans Assistance Grant

- Dollars of grant expended in 2024 to date =
- Assisting Park County Veterans/Families
- Common Services provided included;



- ✓ Veteran/Spouse/Child counseling
- ✓ Psychotherapy
- ✓ Propane
- ✓ Firewood
- ✓ Equine Therapy
- ✓ Auto Repair
- ✓ Emergency Medical Treatment
- ✓ Home Repair

Special Thanks to VSO James Pickart and DHS-FM Charleen Hackett

Issues being addressed by Park Co. VSOs

- **State:**

- Down 6 state VSOs. Acting VSOs (2) are covering entire state of Colorado.
- State is becoming more intrusive/punitive with CVSOs operations but provides less support.

- **Dept of Veterans Affairs:**

- Still understaffed: Nurses/Doctors
 - Lost “thousands” of Claim Raters (VSR. R-VSR) due to a change in pay policy.
 - Raters still working are overloaded and making numerous errors that need to be caught by VSOs.
 - Current claims 1+/- yrs., Future claims will take 2+/- yrs.
 - Submitted a claim last week, was electronically notified that it will take longer than expected.

V.A. Compensation, Pension and Medical expenditures.



- Compensation and Pension is up to **\$12.4 Million** from \$5.5 million in 9 years.
- Medical expenditures up from \$3.8 million to \$6.5 million in 9 years.
- With the Fairplay medical clinic, part of the VA medical funds will stay right here in Park Co.

2022 Park County Veterans Services Cost

Park County program cost \$80,611
Colorado State Reimbursement -\$27,928
Total Park Co. cost \$52,683

Veterans Compensation and Pension: \$12,400,000.00

Park Co. total cost for VSO program: ÷\$52,683

**COST EFFECTIVENESS RATIO: \$235 for every \$1
spent by Park Co.**

Questions?

