

Approved: Feb. 9, 2011

Date

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON VETERANS, MILITARY AND HOMELAND
SECURITY

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mario Goico, at 9:00 a.m. on January 25, 2011, in Room 546-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee Staff Present:

Julian Efird, Legislative Research
Dennis Hodgins, Legislative Research
Doug Taylor, Revisor
Ann Deitcher, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

Brigadier General Lee Tafari, Kansas Adjutant General
Jack Fowler, Exec. Director, Kansas Commission on Veteran's Affairs
Charles M. Yunker, Adjutant, The American Legion Dept. of Kansas

At the request of the Chairman, members of the Committee introduced themselves.

Chairman Goico introduced General Lee Tafari who offered a power point presentation from the Kansas Adjutant General's Department and spoke of the welcoming transformation of the military. (Attachment 1).

General Tafari recounted the beginning of the Kansas National Guard and explained today's organizational structure. He said that the Guard's mission was really a dual mission, consisting of the Federal side where they were training for wartime as well as supporting Army and Air Force missions; while on the state side they were protecting life and property, maintaining peace and order and civil defense.

Questions and answers followed.

Appearing before the Committee next, Jack Fowler spoke of what he called the current difficult and tumultuous times for Kansas veterans. (Attachment 2).

He pointed out that there were some 225,000 Kansas veterans scattered throughout the 105 counties. The challenge for his organization was to identify and locate all those who would benefit from state assistance. He accomplished this through phone calls, the internet and personal visits.

Mr. Fowler told how they were working with the Department of Revenue to identify motorists who were veterans. He said that last year Kansas ranked last among 50 states in the ratio of veterans service representatives to the number of veterans served, and that our veterans are underserved.

This fiscal year the KCVA budget permitted the reopening of two VSR offices – Hutchinson and Marysville – that had been closed because of lack of funds. These reopening – from 11 to 13 VSR offices – moved Kansas to 47th among the 50 states. However, they are still short of funds as the result of Gov. Parkinson's line item veto last year.

Mr. Fowler stated to the Committee that the message to our veterans is twofold: (1) that veteran's status isn't well respected in the state and; (2) that Kansas doesn't support its veteran populations.

Questions and answers followed.

Charles Yunker addressed the Committee next. He stated that the VA itself relies upon Service Organizations like the Legion and VFW to help them insure every veteran wishing to apply for their benefits may do so in the most accurate and expedient manner. (Attachment 3).

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Committee on Veterans, Military and Homeland Security at 9:00 p.m. on January 25, 2011, in Room 546-S of the Capitol.

Mr. Yunker said this fact was established when the VA refused to provide a one-stop facility on Fort Riley unless the Veteran Service Organizations were responsible for the workforce for the facility. The American Legion accepted the invitation and they now maintain a fully staffed office at Ft. Riley which is not part of the state grant.

He closed by stating that he was asking for the Committee's help in their partnership by finding new innovative sources for more revenue so more staff could be hired and trained to meet the ever-increasing need of those who serve and have served to protect us as a nation.

Questions and answers followed.

Copies of questions were distributed regarding how Kansas state government can help their veterans.

(Attachment 4).

Representative Meier spoke of a bill she would like the Committee to consider regarding license plates honoring gold star next of kin.

The motion was accepted by the Chairman to introduce this as a committee bill.

A motion was made by Representative Meier to alter the Kansas Income Tax forms by placing a check-off block for those wishing to donate \$5.00 to KCVA. With no objections, the motion was accepted.

Chairman Goico introduced a resolution to create a caucus on mental health issues for veterans.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:45 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 27, 2011.


*Director Kansas Division of Emergency Management
Director Kansas Homeland Security
The Adjutant General*



**Veterans, Military,
Homeland Security
Committee**



Brigadier General Lee Tafari
Adjutant General's Department
January 25 2011



**Kansas Adjutant General's
Department**

- Welcoming transformation
- Focus on enduring missions
- Big Picture:
 - 35ID - Domestic Response
 - 190th - EMEDS + Med Flights
 - 184th - Air Support Ops Squad/
Predator Drone missions

Veteran/Military/Homeland Security Comm.

Date: 1-25-11

Attachment #: 1-1



Kansas Adjutant General's Department

▪ Big Picture:

- Agri-Business Development Teams
 - KS Intelligence Fusion Center
 - Great Plains Joint Training Center
 - Crisis City
 - Resiliency Program
 - Eisenhower Center for Homeland Security
-



Kansas Adjutant General's Department

Military Operations



Kansas National Guard

Our Beginning

Organized August 30, 1855

Missions

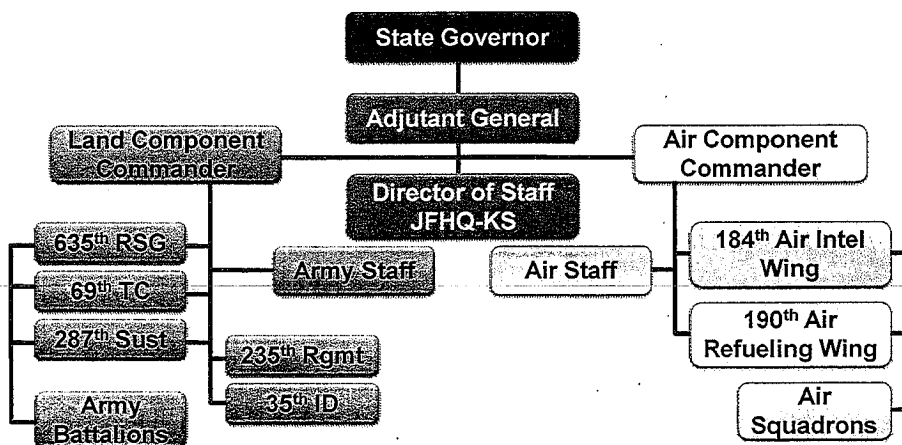
- Homeland Security for Territorial Kansas
- Border Conflicts between Free-Staters & Pro-Slavery Forces
- Defending against Indian Raids



Hiram J. Strickler
Appointed: August 31, 1855



Organization Structure





Our Mission

Dual Missions

Federal

- ◆ Train for Wartime
- ◆ Support Army & Air Force Missions

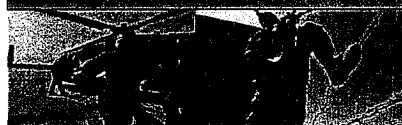
State

- ◆ Protect Life & Property
- ◆ Peace & Order
- ◆ Civil Defense



Spectrum of Domestic Operations

State Missions



Federal Warfighting Missions



Emergency Preparedness

Homeland Defense

Support to Civil Authorities/Civil Support Team

Counterdrug

Contingencies

Homeland Security Expeditionary Medical Support System

Disaster Response

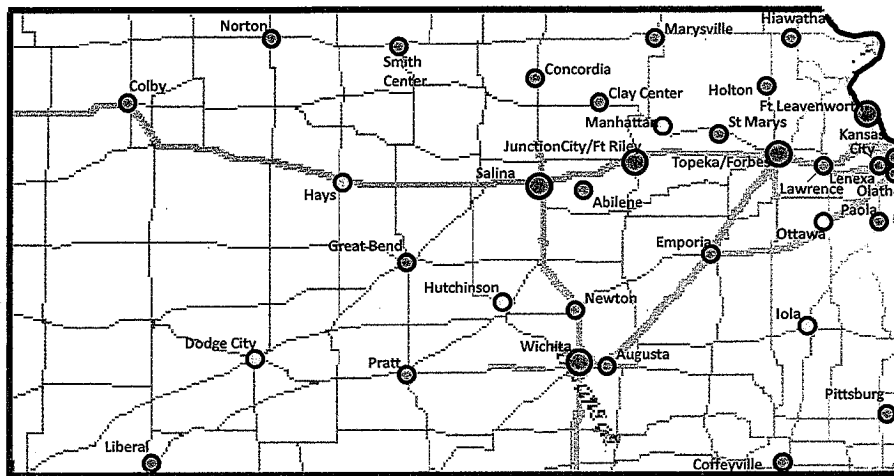


The National Guard uses its unique dual roles to operate across this entire spectrum. Key Reliance on Emergency Management Agreement Compacts.



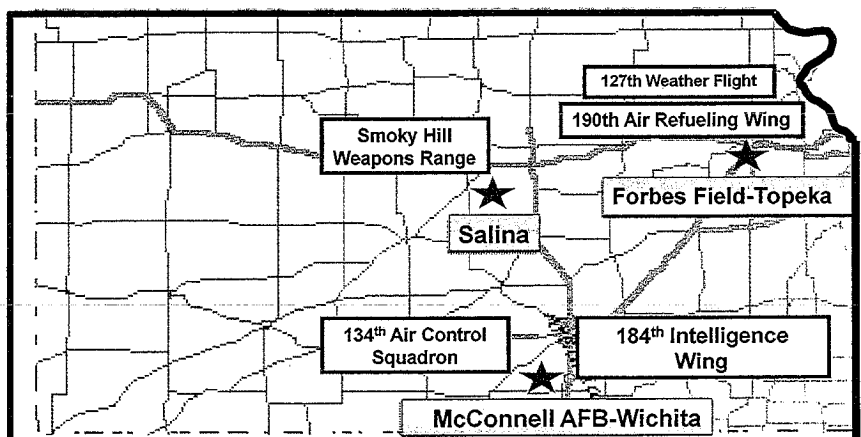
Armory Facilities

5,600 Soldiers



Air Facilities

2,250 Airmen



Enduring Missions Horn of Africa

2-137th Combined Arms Battalion
Missions are between 400-575 personnel

Enduring Missions ADT

Major Insurgent Groups in Afghanistan

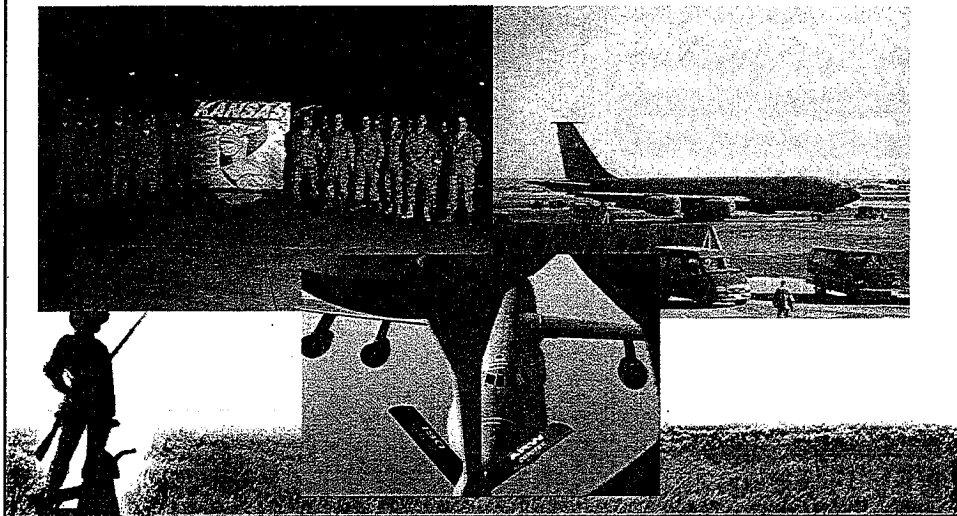
Agri-Business Development
Team, Afghanistan

Supported by KS State
agricultural department

ADT 4 is currently
training



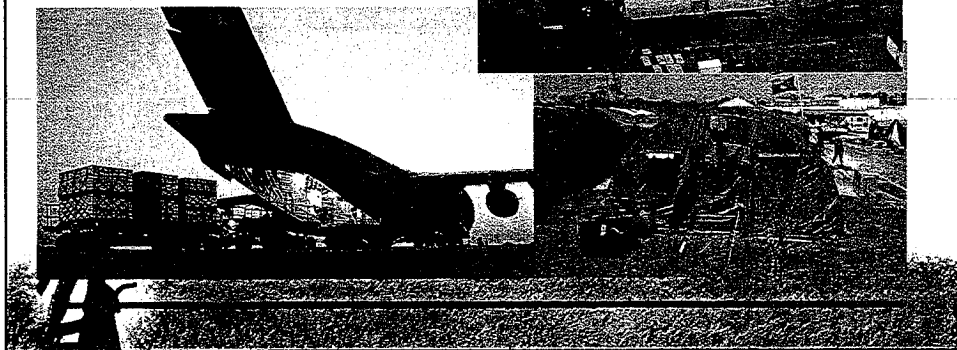
190th Air Refueling Wing Topeka



190th ARW EMEDS

Expeditionary Medical Support

- Used in Katrina & Greensburg
- Modular Design, Expandable
- Palletized for easy loading
- Four Sets

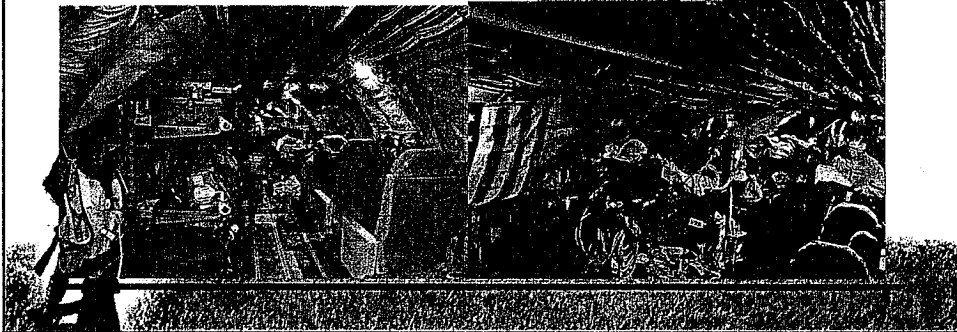
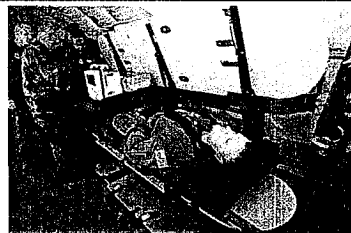




190th ARW CCATT

Critical Care Air Transport Teams

- Modifications to KC-135 Tanker
- 12 Ambulatory Passengers
- Cargo over, patients back
- Continuously improving operation

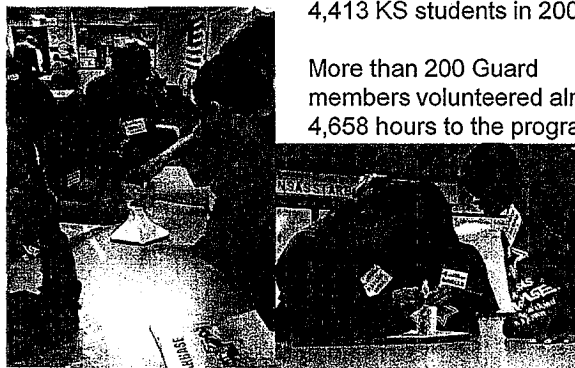


190th ARW STARBASE

- KS STARBASE received nearly \$44,182 in grants/donations (supplements fed funding)
- KS STARBASE partnered with Fort Hays to offer summer academies in Hays & Colby

4,413 KS students in 2009

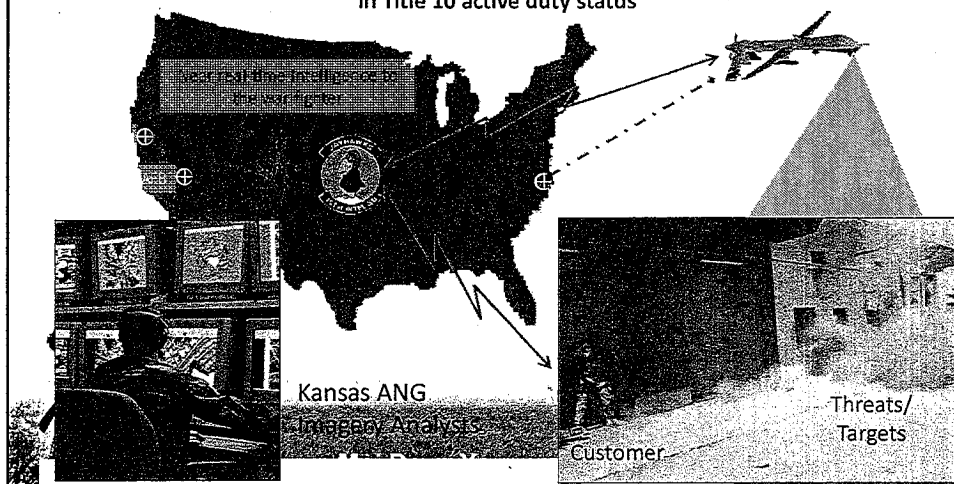
More than 200 Guard
members volunteered almost
4,658 hours to the program





184th IW

161st Intelligence Squadron:
Third year of in-garrison deployment of over 60 personnel
in Title 10 active duty status



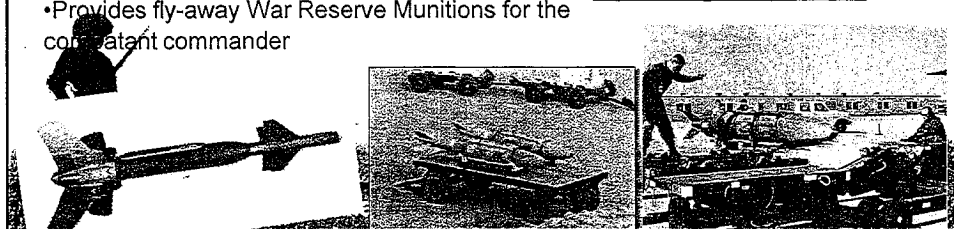
184th IW

284th Air Support Operations Squadron

- \$10M facility at Smoky Hill Weapons Range
- Only MRAP training in the ANG
- Advise and train Army commanders on the capabilities and employment of air power

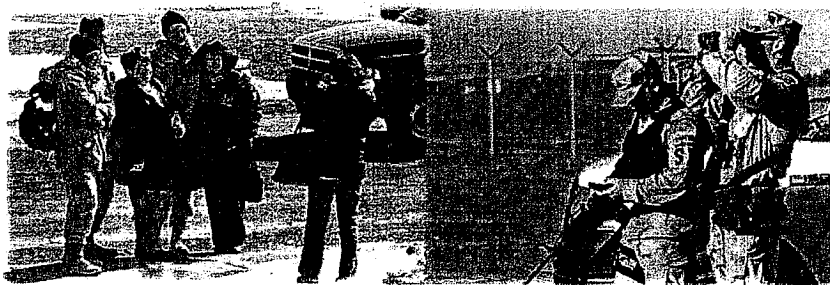
Munitions Storage Area STAMP/STRAPP

- Largest Munitions Storage Area in ANG
- Provides fly-away War Reserve Munitions for the combatant commander





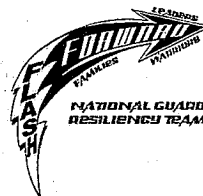
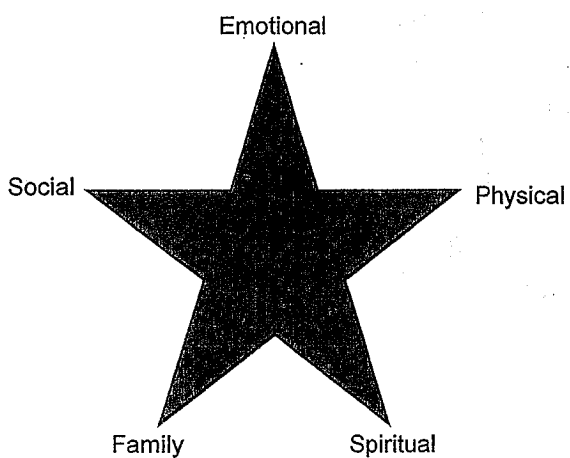
Soldier/Airman Care



- Soldier & Airman Care
- Wounded Initiative
- Family Programs
- Physical Fitness Centers
- ESGR



Soldier/Airman Care Resiliency





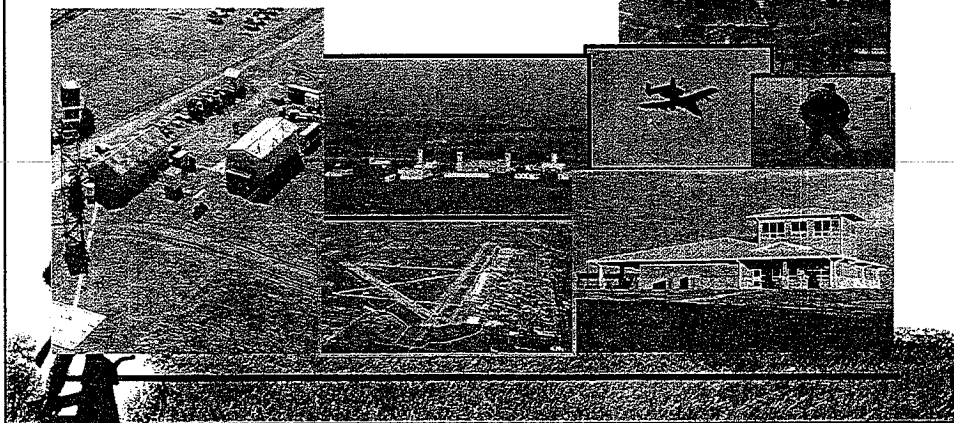
Soldier/Airman Care Safety Net

*Military One Source
Psychological Health
Yellow Ribbon
Resiliency
Sexual Assault Program
Chaplain
Family Program
Transition Advisor
ESGR
Tri Care*



Great Plains Joint Training Center Salina

- New Air Support Operations Squadron Building Open
- Joint exercises continue to grow
- Renewed agreement with Fort Riley

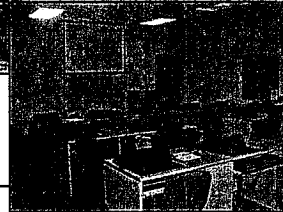
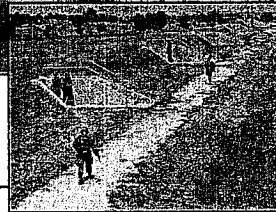
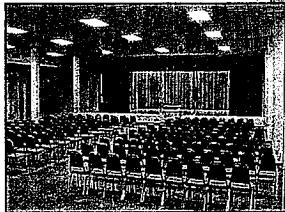




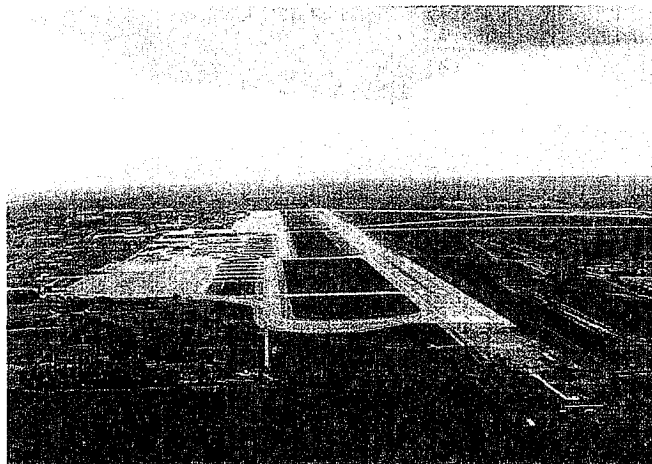
GPJTC Salina

Key Elements:

- Billeting for 600 personnel
- Auditorium seating for 300
- Classroom facilities for 300
- Video Teleconference Suites
- Simulations Center
- HEAT trainer
- Geographically located next to the Salina Regional Airport
- Located within 10 minutes of Crisis City and Smoky Hill
- Small Arms Weapons Ranges



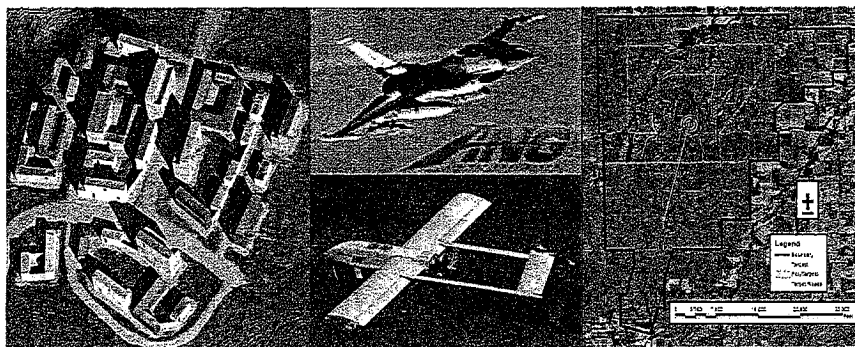
GPJTC Partnership w/Salina Airport





GPJTC Smoky Hills Weapons Range

- *Largest and Busiest Range in the Air National Guard*
- *State of the Art Electronic Counter Measures*
- *Joint Army-Air Training – Unmanned Aerial Systems*
- *East part of range for Army Guard Training*



GPJTC PTAE



Pre-Mobilization Training and Assessment Team - PTAE

Reducing Time at the Mobilization Station

- Best PTAE in the nation
- Joint Assessment Conference is working!
- All individual training done in KS
- Working closely with Mobilization Station
- Small teams down to only 10 days at Mobilization site, larger teams take longer





State Partnership Program

**Partnership
Established
In 2003**



First events in 2004

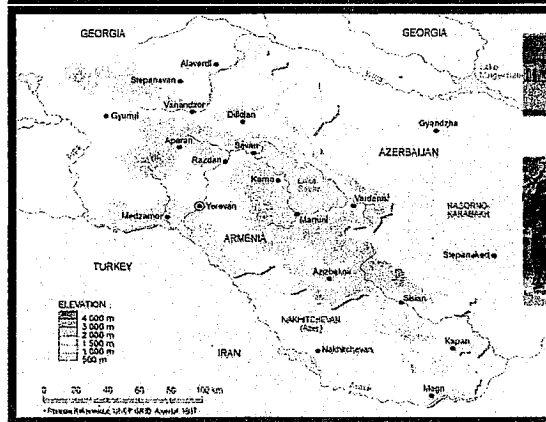
Three tenants:

- Military to military
- Military to civilian
- Civilian to civilian

*The Kansas National Guard
led a 14 country multi-national
disaster relief exercise in
Armenia in July 2006*



State Partnership Program

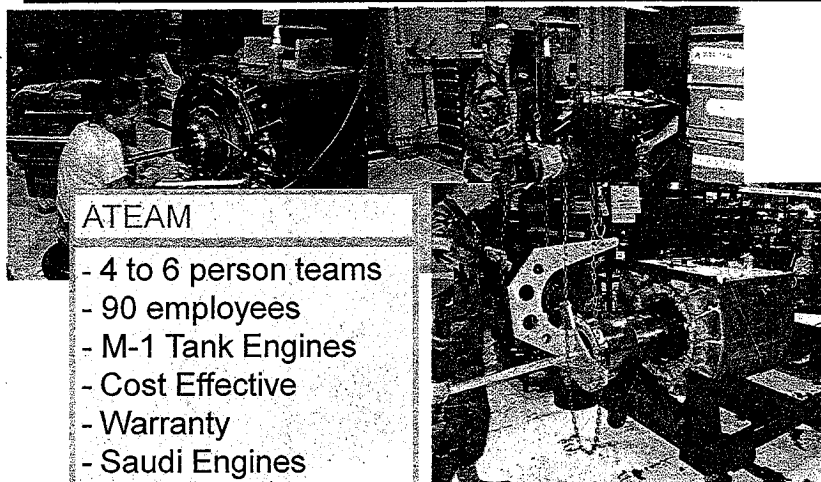


- Pursuing second state partnership program in Africa

Republic Of Armenia



ATEAM



ATEAM

- 4 to 6 person teams
- 90 employees
- M-1 Tank Engines
- Cost Effective
- Warranty
- Saudi Engines

Brig Gen Lee Tafarielli

Kansas Adjutant General's Department



RSMS

Fort Riley – 150 state employees authorized

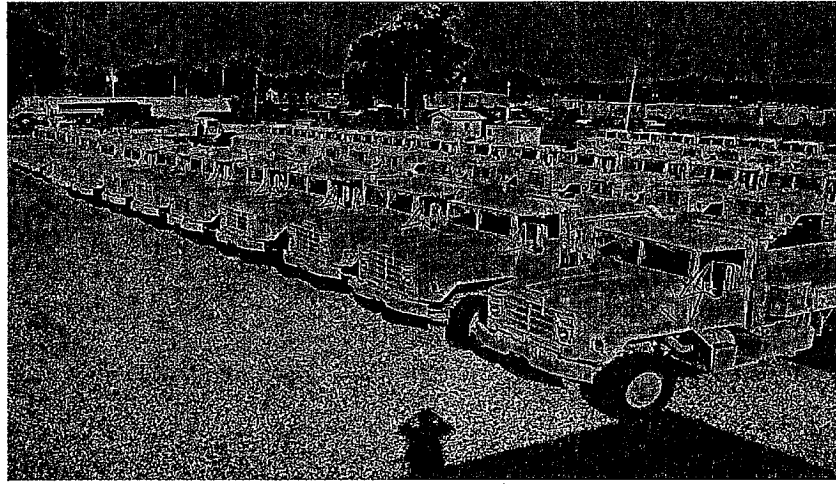
- cost effective
- labor efficient
- worksite has already saved the government an additional \$14 million

- The RSMS provides the Army National Guard with top quality military vehicles and component refurbishment or repair.





RSMS



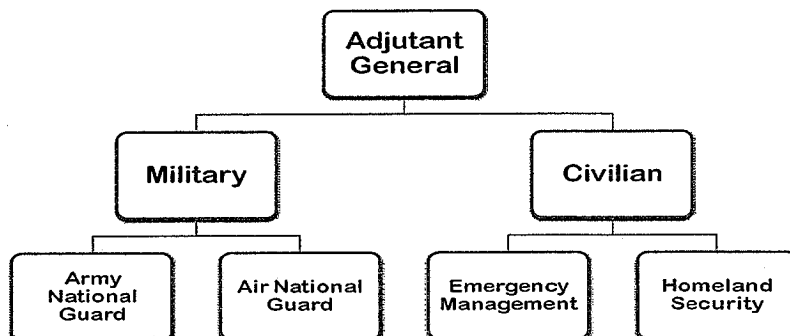
***Kansas Adjutant General's
Department***

***Kansas Division of
Emergency Management***





Adjutant General's Department



KDEM

- **Mission:** Building sustainable capabilities across all phases of Emergency Management in Kansas through selfless service
- **Goals:** Save lives, prevent injuries, protect property and the environment



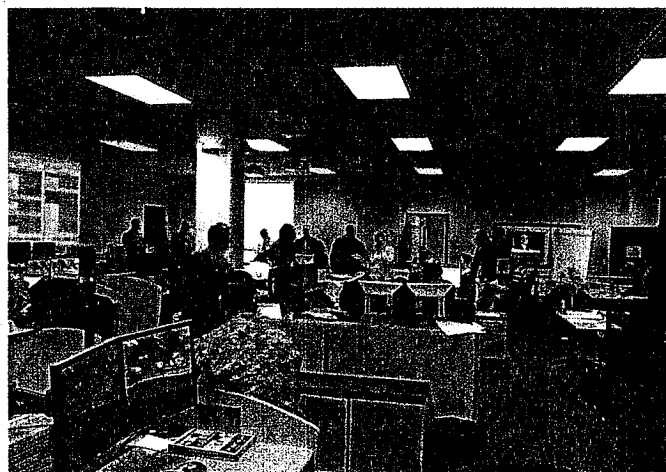
KDEM

- State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC)
- Lead State Hazard Mitigation Team
- Emergency Planning
 - Primary for State Plan
 - Technical assistance & approval of local plans
- Train staff & other emergency personnel
- Lead coordinating agency
- Disaster assessment
- Prepare request for Federal assistance
- Public information & education
- Resource management
- Radiological & chemical consultation
- Develop Kansas Response Plan



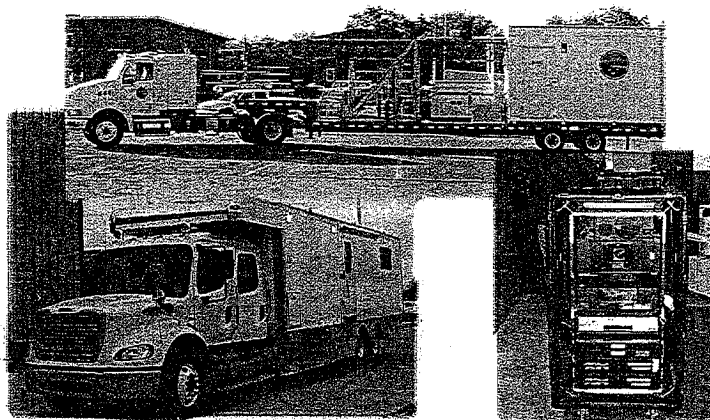
KDEM

State Emergency Operations Center

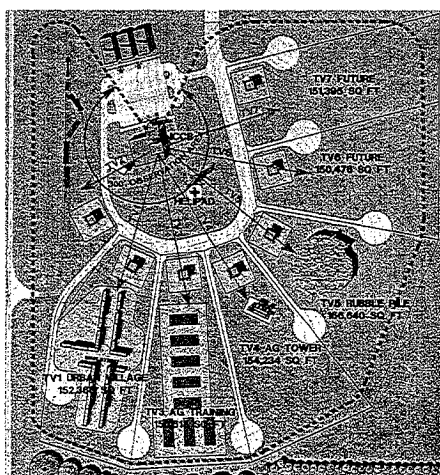




KDEM **Mobile Command Center**



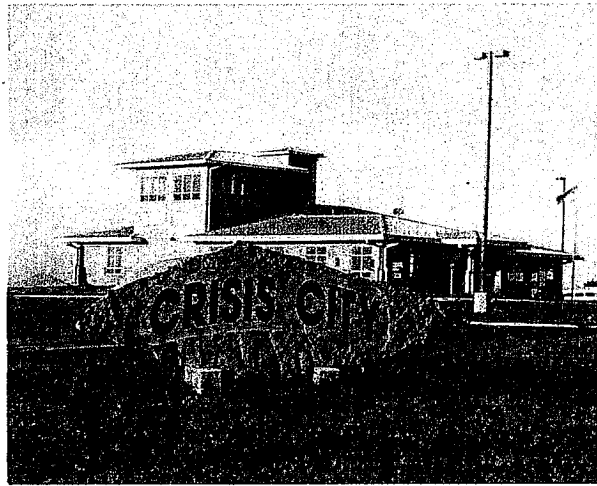
KDEM **Crisis City-Salina**



1. Railroad Training Venue
2. Urban Search & Rescue Training Props
3. Concrete Rubble Piles
4. Grain Bin Extraction
5. Farm & Ag Rescue Props
6. Incident Command Center
7. Urban Training Village
8. 5-Story Special Rescue Training Tower
9. Haz-Mat Training Props
10. Confined Space Rescue Training Props



KDEM **Crisis City Headquarters - Salina**



KDEM Facilities **Salina, Crisis City**



Incident Emergency
Management Course



Search & Rescue
Response Teams

- Pipeline
- Aircraft Fuselage
- Agriculture & Farm Safety (in progress)
- K-9 Agility and Directional Courses (in progress)
- Rescue tower
- 2 x Collapsed Structures



KDEM Facilities

Salina, Crisis City



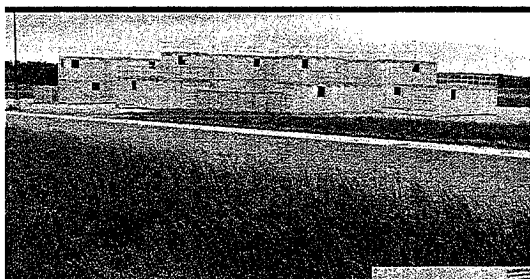
Rubble Pile

Railway Donated by
Burlington Northern
Sante Fe



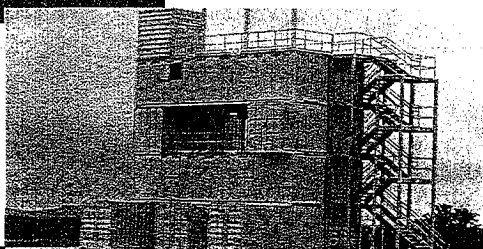
KDEM Facilities

Salina, Crisis City



Urban
Village

Technical Rescue
Tower





Eisenhower Center for Homeland Security Studies

71 Partners and growing



Eisenhower Center

- Facilitated delivery of 22 courses from the National Domestic Preparedness Consortium providers to 840 KS first responders
- Sent 867 KS first responders to courses on NDPC campuses
- Coordinated delivery and attendance at 48 training/conference events for Regional HS Councils





Eisenhower Center

- Conducted 133 NIMS emergency management courses (2,733 participants)
- Conducted 5 webinars on NIMS 2010 compliance to 86 participants
- Developed an "EM 101" for new emergency managers
- 4,000 trained in COOP



Exercise Initiatives

- Strengthening capabilities for exercise development and simulation
 - Eisenhower Center
 - Crisis City
- Integrated Emergency Management Courses
 - Community specific pilot (FEB 2012)
 - Lyon County
- Regional/shared exercises
- Increase in support for local exercises



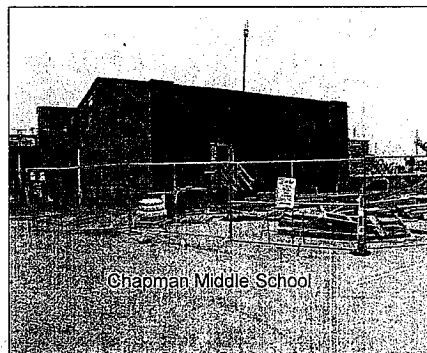
State COOP Planning

- 67 State agencies have a COOP Plan
- 3 table-top exercises held
- 1,280 people trained (public and private sector)
- 643 Local Continuity of Operations Plans
 - KC Region: 9
 - NC Region: 46
 - NW Region: 107
 - NE Region: 146
 - SC Region: 81
 - SW Region: 169
 - SE Region: 85



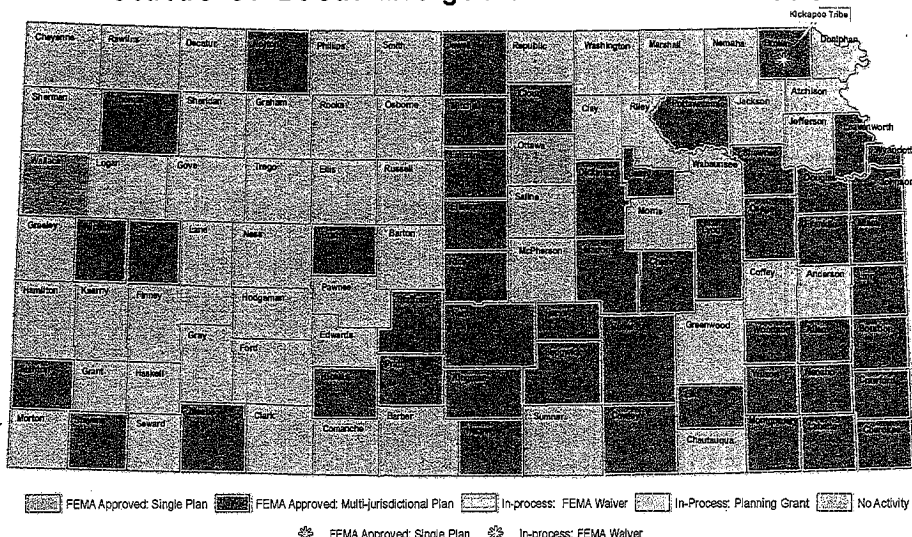
Mitigation Highlights 2010

- Funded 174 safe room projects
- Acquisition of over 1,200 flood prone properties
- Warning Siren initiative
- Rural Electric retrofit/upgrades

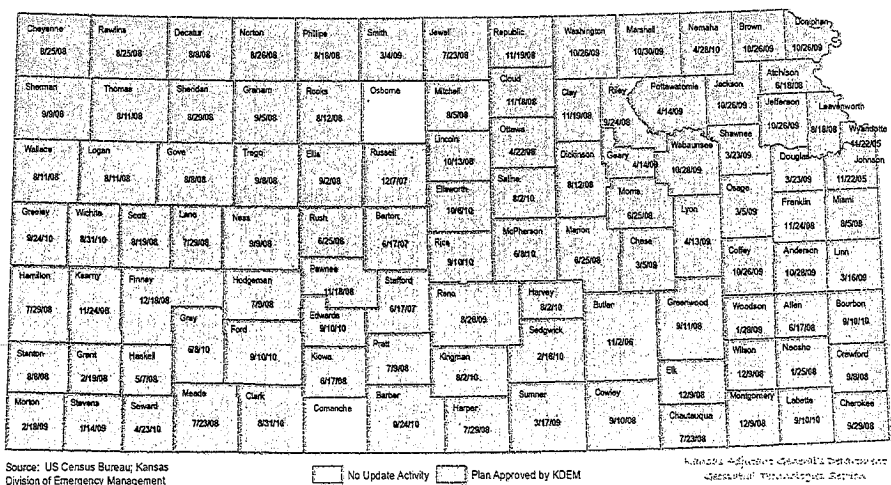


Chapman Middle School

Status of Local Mitigation Plans in Kansas



Local Emergency Operation Plan Status





Federal Disasters 2010

- 4 major declared disasters

- ✧ DR1860-KS – severe storms/flooding (SEPT 09)
- ✧ DR1868-KS – winter storm (DEC 09)
- ✧ DR1885 – winter storm (FEB 10)
- ✧ DR1932 – severe storms (AUG 10)

- ✧ 1 Small Business Administration

- 12 federal disaster declarations open



Regional Accomplishments

- Regional Council infrastructure

- 5 year history / evolution of positive change
- Multi-discipline, multi-jurisdictional solutions
- Leadership workshops (quarterly) enhances consistency

- Joint investments

- Interoperability, Incident Management Teams (IMT), Search & Rescue Teams (SAR) credentialing, planning
-



Kansas Center for Safe and Prepared Schools

- Provides leadership, training and resources to member schools
 - 280 member school districts
 - Collaborative approach
 - Model school plans and vulnerability assessments
-

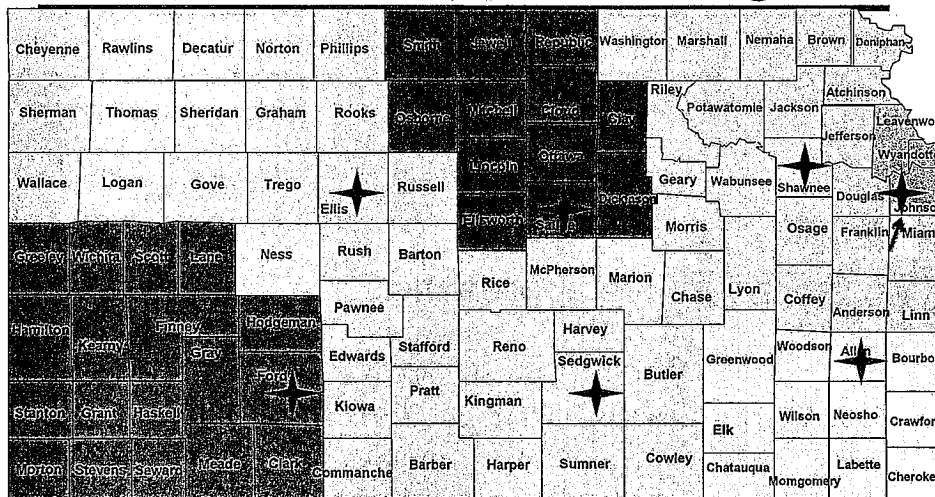


Kansas Adjutant General's Department

Kansas Homeland Security

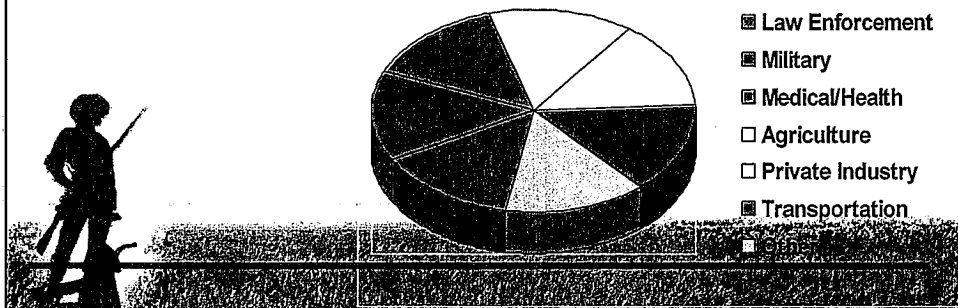


Homeland Security Regions



Kansas Intelligence Fusion Center

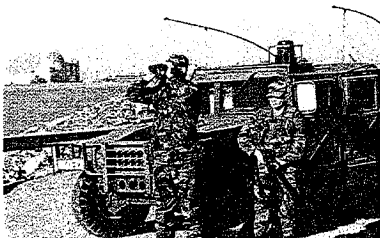
1. The Kansas Fusion Center is a Multi-Discipline/Multi-Agency fusion center
2. Conducts Strategic Analysis, not just information sharing, in support of Kansas policy/decision makers
3. Located in a Sensitive Compartmented Information Facility (SCIF)
4. Access to national level intelligence (i.e., access to Classified intelligence)





Agency Partnerships Wolf Creek

Protecting Critical Infrastructure



Wolf Creek Nuclear Power Plant Security & Safety



Agency Partnerships Business and Industry Forum

Collaboration with Business & Industry Partners

- Transportation
- Agriculture
- Utilities
- Communications
- 1st Responders

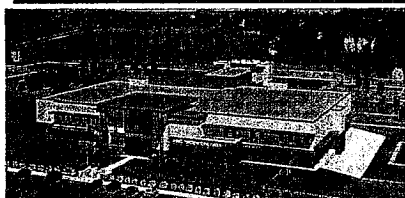




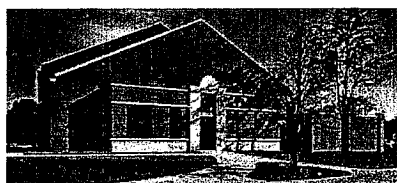
Agency Partnerships ***Pittsburg Armory on PSU Campus***



Agency Partnerships ***Wichita/Leavenworth***



Heartland Preparedness Center



35th Infantry Division Readiness Center

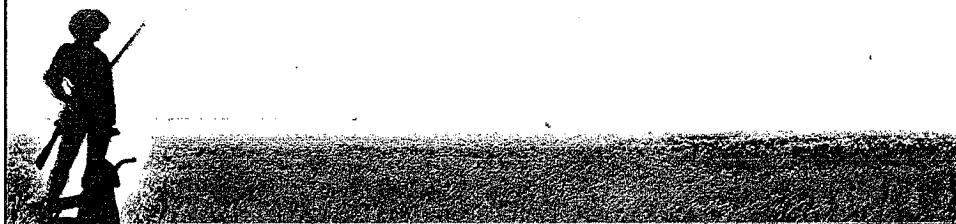
- Joint Public Safety facility
- Partnering with Wichita and Sedgwick County, KHP
- 45-acre complex
- Army Readiness Center
- Field Maintenance Shop
- Working with city of Leavenworth/Fort Leavenworth



Kansas Adjutant General's Department

Thank you!

Brig Gen Lee Tafanelli



Testimony to the House Veterans, Military and
Homeland Security Committee
By Jack Fowler
Executive Director, Kansas Commission on Veterans' Affairs
Tuesday, January 25, 2011
Room 546-S

Chairman Goico, distinguished members of the Veterans, Military and Homeland

Security Committee: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to brief you on the

Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs. I will be brief. With me today are:

Chuck Yunker, Department Adjutant, American Legion, and Ken Stodgell, Adjutant of
the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

These are difficult times for Kansas. And no group is more sensitive to these times—
and what a reduction in a budget means—than our Kansas veterans. There are some
225,000 of them scattered throughout our 105 counties. Their spouses add another

~~65,000~~ 112,000

to that total. And they look to each of you for support.

Veteran/Military/Homeland Security Comm.

Date: 1-25-11

Attachment #: 2-1

Some of you are familiar with the KCVA. For those whose first orientation of the KCVA is this morning, let me say that the KCVA consists of 13 Veterans Service Offices located throughout the state, two enhanced delivery systems....mobile office vehicles... one stationed in Hays, the other in Dodge City...to serve rural Kansas....these vans will be delivered to KCVA in February.

Additionally, the American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars staff the three federal military hospitals in Leavenworth, Topeka, and Wichita with some funding under the Veterans Claims Assistance Program (VCAP), which was funded by the 2006 Legislature at \$500,000. Since that time budget reductions has reduced State funding below that level, but I'm pleased to state that KCVA has restored that initial amount. I can't state too strongly the importance of the veterans service representatives of the KCVA, the American Legion, the Veterans of Foreign Wars, and other service organizations. They are the people who are in the front lines of serving Kansas veterans....and they have an enormous task. I'll return to these critical people in a moment.

The other components of the KCVA are: the Soldiers' Home at Fort Dodge, the Veterans' Home at Winfield, four state veterans cemeteries (Fort Dodge, Wakeeney, Winfield, and Ft. Riley/Manhattan), and a federally-funded State Approving Agency, that approves education programs for federal tuition assistance to Kansas veterans.

Having described the pieces of the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs, I'd like to spend my remaining time this morning on two areas: Veterans Services and our Veterans' Home at Winfield.

VETERANS SERVICES

First of all, we are extremely grateful to the Kansas Legislature for the funding which allowed KCVA to begin its enhanced delivery system. This initiative will allow us to reach veterans that might otherwise be unreachable....by taking the office to their locations....by placing our veterans service representatives at their doorstep, so to

speaking. This will give the KCVA a new level of visibility by bringing a heightened awareness of earned Federal Benefits to all Kansas veterans.

Our challenge is identifying and locating all veterans who would benefit from our assistance: through phone calls, the internet, and personal visits. Toward that identification, we are working with the Department of Revenue to identify motorists who are veterans. We plan to have a procedure to do just that by this time next year. This fiscal year, the KCVA signed a MOU with KHPA, SRS, and Aging on identifying veterans. Additionally, another program is in a partnership with the SRS, all applicants for benefits must first visit a KCVA field office. What all of this means is that it takes more, not less, boots on the ground in the form of veterans service representatives.

Last year Kansas ranked last among the 50 states in the ratio of veterans service representatives to the number of veterans served.

During this fiscal year, thanks to the Legislature and the Governor, the KCVA budget permitted the reopening of two VSR offices—Hutchinson and Marysville—that had been closed the previous year due to a declining budget. These reopening—from 11 to 13 VSR offices—moved Kansas to 47th among the 50 states. To provide benefits to more than 225,000 Kansas veterans and their families spread out over our 105 counties. Our surrounding states are much better staffed to provide benefits and services to their veterans: Colorado, Nebraska, Missouri, and Oklahoma are ranked 15th, 20th, 21st, and 29th, respectively, on this scale.

We also received funding from scratch lottery proceeds to proceed with an enhanced delivery system with the purchase of two stand-alone mobile offices for Western Kansas. They will operate out of Hays and Ft. Dodge.

Now is not the time to delay the progress with budget reductions. Rather, we requested funds to open two more VSR offices—much needed.

CURRENT STATUS

Moreover, our Kansas warriors are returning from Middle East battlegrounds with a variety of "invisible wounds" such as mild-to-moderate traumatic brain injury and post traumatic stress. There is much work ahead for all of us in the diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation of these less-visible injuries.

Additionally, all aspects of veterans organizations need to expand and enhance treatment programs serving women veterans. Women are serving in the military at unprecedented levels—and must be cared for after leaving active service.

All of these matters underscore the need for more veterans service representatives—not less—to identify and provide the benefits they have richly earned.

VETERANS HOME

KCVA sought supplementary funding for FY 2011 to bring Medicare to that facility. It was denied. And that places the Veterans Home between a rock and a hard place. By

way of background, when the Soldiers' Home began the process of converting to Medicare and Medicaid – an initiative requested by the Governor -- an experienced consulting firm (Pinon Management from Colorado) was hired to shepherd the Soldiers' Home through the Medicare and Medicaid process—at a cost of some \$130,000 dollars, carryover \$\$ at Ft. Dodge. The Veterans' Home converted to Medicaid, with some help from the Soldiers' Home, at no cost. There are no carryover \$\$ at the Veterans' Home. We requested supplemental funding of \$81,320 dollars--\$21,320 for the necessary Accu-Med software to implement Medicare, and \$60,000 dollars for consulting fees to train the business office and to maximize the billing of both programs.

That request was denied. Our only alternative is to make the purchases from existing funds, which may force the layoff of additional personnel to pay for it. This is clearly not the way to proceed, given that the Veterans' Home laid-off 31 persons last fiscal year, and suffered a \$1.1 million dollar gap between revenues and expenditures in that same period.

The next area of concern is in the 5% Reduction Package, which the Governor accepted, for a savings of \$414,678 dollars. Of that amount, the Veterans' Home would reduce operating expenses in its nursing program by \$139,299 dollars. This reduction would be achieved by reducing resident census and direct care staff. The census reduction would lose over \$150,000 dollars (\$87K plus in DVA per diem and \$70K in resident fees). And, as you may know, the funding mechanism is very complicated, due to the fact that DVA per diem and resident fees are never the same from month to month.

Moreover, the message that further reductions would send is twofold: (1) that a veteran's status isn't well respected in the state; and (2) that Kansas doesn't support its veteran population.

In summary, the Home faces an enormous challenge in the coming months, with severe penalties from federal and state inspectors if it cannot pass its annual inspections. Such penalties include ban on admissions, civil penalty fines, loss of

Medicaid payments and Medicare payments, and Department of Veterans Affairs per diem payments, all of which could lead to the closure of the Home.

I now stand for your questions.

Jack Fowler

Executive Director

House Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee

Testimony by

Charles M. Yunker, Adjutant

The American Legion Department of Kansas

Tuesday, January 25, 2011 Room 546-S

Chairman Goico and members of the Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee, on behalf of The American Legion Department of Kansas I wish to express our organization's sincere appreciation for granting me the opportunity to address you this morning regarding the budget for on the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs. While The American Legion is vitally interested in the entire mission of the Kansas Commission on Veterans Affairs I will strict my testimony today to the Veterans Claims Assistance Program and Veteran services in general.

As I am sure you know the grant generously provided for by the Legislature is paramount to the Legion and VFW's ability to assist the State of Kansas in providing services to veterans wishing to file for their earned VA benefits. What you might not know is that the VA itself relies upon Service Organizations like the Legion and VFW to help them insure every veteran wishing to apply for their benefits may do so in the most accurate and expedient manner. That fact was proven when the VA refused to establish a one stop facility on Fort Riley unless the Veteran Service Organizations were invited to help man that facility. The American Legion accepted that invitation and we maintain a fully staffed office at Ft. Riley which is not a part of the state grant. Again my point is the VA itself relies upon Service Organizations to help them help veterans.

The demand for services from The American Legion and the VFW is increasing in the number of veterans being served but more so in the complexity of the claims being filed for service connected disability. Today it is rare that a veteran files for just one or two injuries; more often than not they are filing for their visual injuries such as wounds and missing limbs but also PTSD and TBC. The difficulty in servicing a veteran with PTSD or TBC is daunting and very time consuming for a variety of reasons including having to review every detail with many veterans over and over because they forget what they are told, or the vet loses patience due to a bout of PTSD.

Veteran/Military/Homeland Security Comm

Date: 1-25-11

Attachment #: 3-1

We are rapidly reaching a critical point in our ability to serve everyone who wishes to be served for the reasons I just cited; increased numbers of veterans seeking assistance and increased time in processing multiple claims while having to duplicate efforts for veterans who have difficulty in understanding the process. Another factor, one which we did not see coming until recently is an investigation by the US Department of Labor.

Even though we have always considered our Veteran Service Representatives to be in the "exempt category" due to the specialized training required by both the VA and state in order to obtain and remain accreditation to represent veterans before the US Veterans Board of appeals, our VSRs have always been instructed to work no more than 40 hours per week because our treasury cannot afford to pay over time. We simply do not have the funds and we wanted to treat our employees fairly.

Yesterday we were informed they are not exempt in the view of the Department of Labor and we were cited for over fifty six hundred dollars in overtime pay for VSRs who apparently, without our knowledge worked after hours to catch up on their workload.

That leaves us with quite a problem. First we need to figure out where to come up with close to six thousand dollars, and secondly the workload has not diminished. Ladies and gentlemen simply put we are between a rock and a hard place. We find ourselves walking a tightrope that requires us to serve every veteran who walks in our door as per the requirement of the state funded grant, and making certain every veteran who files a claim has their claim on file with the VA by the end of the month otherwise we are liable for any compensation or benefit they would receive during that month.

To compound the problem the KCVA is being asked to take a 5% cut spread out among all programs including Veteran Services including the grant. The cut to veteran services amounts to just over **\$107,000**. The negative impact to Kansas veterans through lost federal benefits could be 100 times that amount.

We feel the Kansas Veterans Services program is a model of public private partnership a partnership between the state of Kansas and Veteran Service Organizations. A partnership that has served veterans, their dependents and survivors for 65 years; it may surprise you that little has changed in those 65 years.

In 1947 there were an estimated 240,000 veterans in Kansas today the estimate is about 235,000. Back then less than 100,000 of those veterans were members of a veteran's service organization. This is also true today because we do not require membership in order to be served. For the past 65 years the KCVA, American Legion and VFW have partnered to serve all veterans, dependents and survivors. In 1947 the KCVA operated 15 field offices across the state. Today KCVA has 13 field offices but a fraction of the 1947 staff trying their best to serve every veteran who seeks assistance,

I am here today to ask you to help us in our partnership by finding new innovative sources for more revenue so more staff can be hired and trained to meet the ever increasing need of those who serve and have served to protect us as a nation.

Again thank you for this opportunity to address you today. I stand ready for any questions you may have.

Charles M. Yunker, Adjutant
The American Legion
Department of Kansas

VETERAN'S QUESTIONS

How can Kansas state government:

- ☒ Aide in helping veterans register for benefits from the federal government?
- ☒ Aide veterans with agent orange medical problems and Gulf War syndrome?
- ☒ Better fund old soldier's home?
- ☒ Refurbish hospitals to be eligible for Medicaid programs to veterans?
- ☒ Help veterans with income taxes and driver's license (check off box on forms and licenses)?
- ☒ Help veterans to apply to nursing homes?
- ☒ Help veterans with prescriptions?

Veteran/Military/Homeland Security Comm.

Date: 1-25-11

Attachment #: 4-1

The following information is in response to the request of Dennis Hodgins, Legislative Analyst for the Veterans, Military and Homeland Security Committee. The questions posed are attached and are grouped together where appropriate.

1. STOP-LOSS: This program involves service members, veterans or beneficiaries of service members who had their military service involuntarily extended under the Stop-Loss program between September 11, 2001 and September 30, 2009. There may be up to 80,000 Americans who may be eligible for a Retroactive Stop-Loss Special Pay (RSLSP). The deadline to apply has been extended to December 3, 2010. To receive the benefit, a claim must be submitted. The DOD website (<http://www.defense.gov/stoploss>) has links to service-specific sites, where more information is available.

2. HELPING VETERANS:

- a. Register for benefits from the federal government.
- b. With Agent Orange and other medical problems.
- c. Apply to nursing homes.

d. With prescriptions.

These matters can be determined by visiting a veterans service representative (VSR), either at one of the 13 offices throughout Kansas, or at the VA Hospital in Leavenworth, Topeka, or Wichita.

I will address the need for more VSR's on January 25, 2011.

3. FUNDING VETERANS' HOMES: support funding. Do not permit the funding erosion to reduce the quality of care at the Veterans' Home in Winfield or the Soldiers' Home at Ft. Dodge. I will address this matter in my briefing on January 25, 2011.

4. MEDICAID PROGRAMS:

- a. Ft. Dodge: Is certified for both Medicaid and Medicare.
- b. Winfield: Is certified for Medicare, and is in the process of obtaining the software necessary to implement Medicaid.

5. INCOME TAXES AND DRIVERS LICENSES:

a. KCVA would like to have a place on the Kansas income tax form, similar to that of the Chickadee Write-Off, where Kansas citizens could decide if they wanted to donate \$5 or \$10 dollars to the support of KCVA. This was attempted several years ago unsuccessfully.

b. On drivers licenses, KCVA is working with the Department of Revenue to implement a measure, similar to that in California, in which a veteran could be identified when applying for a new or renewal of a drivers license. A line on the drivers license application/renewal would ask if the person was a veteran. If answered yes, that person's name/address would be forwarded to KCVA for follow-up.