



Department of
Veterans Affairs

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 461-7600
www.va.gov

News Release

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VA Jobs Boost Local Economy ***Montgomery Office Uses Recovery Funds to Improve Services to Veterans***

MONTGOMERY -- The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and its Montgomery VA regional benefits office are putting Americans directly to work with funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

The Montgomery VA regional office was authorized to hire 34 new employees to assist with processing Veterans' claims for VA benefits. The new jobs came from federal dollars allocated under the Recovery Act, enacted by Congress in February 2009.

"The jobs created under the Recovery Act are a real boost to Alabama's economy," said VA Regional Office Director Ricardo Randle. "These new employees are a great resource to our office, and the assistance they provide allows us to better serve Alabama's Veterans and their dependents."

The new hires are involved in administrative work supporting the professional adjudicators who make compensation, pension or education decisions, or process changes in Veterans' benefits. VA expects the additional staffing will help to deliver Veterans their benefits as quickly as possible.

The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 provided \$150 million for the program to hire and train the new staffers. Nationally, VA has put 2,300 people to work in benefits offices including 500 new staff members hired as permanent employees.

While Recovery Act funding for the term employees will expire in September 2010, the 2011 President's budget includes funds to retain or replace these employees on a permanent basis and to hire more than 2,000 additional new processors.

In addition to bolstering the benefits office staffing, the law is funding more than \$1 billion of improvements at VA medical centers and national cemeteries around the country.

More information about VA benefits is available at www.va.gov or Veterans may contact one of VA's Call Center representatives at 1-800-827-1000.

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