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NEWS BRIEFS

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Alabama Absentee Voting Initiative

Governor Bob Riley's task force on military and overseas voting has approved proposed legislation that would allow military members serving overseas to request and return voting ballots by secure e-mail, fax, electronic transmission or commercial carriers.

State Representative Jimmy Martin will introduce the bill to the Alabama's House of Representatives in the upcoming legislative session that begins February 3. Martin said he is confident the bill would be voted on.

State officials said if the new legislation passes, it will be implemented statewide at no cost to cities or counties.

Alabama Secretary of State Beth Chapman, who led the task force, is hopeful military members serving overseas will be able to use the secure absentee voting system by the state's 2010 elections.

Website for Veteran Entrepreneurs

The Veterans Business Resource Center has a Website designed for veterans who manage or own their own business. The Website, VETBIZ, offers veterans with business development, management, financial, technical or procurement assistance.

Veterans can register their business with VETBIZ at no cost. The VETBIZ Website was developed to help veterans quickly locate community resources to

assist them to starting or expanding a business. For more information, visit www.Vetbiz.com, or call 314-531-VETS.

Required Documents for Social Security Benefits

In order to have special earnings credited to a veteran's military record for Social Security benefits, they need to provide a copy of their Armed Forces Report of Discharge known as the DD 214 when applying for the benefits. If the veteran served in the Selected Reserves, an equivalent discharge document is required.

Veterans can contact their nearest Social Security Administration office to determine other documents they may need for the benefits.

Veterans can request copies of their discharge documents by calling their County Veterans Service Office.

VA Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Program Criteria

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation, known as DIC, may be authorized to survivors of military personnel who die while on active duty or to the dependents of honorably discharged veterans who die due to their service-connected disabilities, or who were totally disabled due to a service-connected disability for a specific period of time prior to their death.

In some cases the DIC benefit may also be authorized to dependent children older than 18 years as well as to the veteran's dependent parents.

The DIC monthly basic rate is \$1,154 for surviving spouses. The basic rate may be more depending on the veteran's military rank at the time of death and if the spouse is caring for eligible dependents.

For more information on the special provisions of the VA's DIC benefit, please visit or call your County Veterans Service Office.

Registration for the Selective Service Reminder for All Male Citizens

The Federal Law requires that all male U.S. citizens and male aliens residing in the U.S., who are between the ages of 18 and 26, to register with the Selective Service within 30 days of their 18th birthday.

Registrants may obtain and complete a registration form at the U.S. Post Office where the completed form will be mailed by the Post Office to the Selective Service Data Management Center or you may register via the Internet at (<http://www.sss.gov>.)