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Arapahoe County Veterans Service Office recovers millions of dollars in 2016

Veterans Service Officers assisted more than 5,000 Veterans and their families with claims

LITTLETON, CO --- The Arapahoe County Veterans Service office was very busy in 2016. The office recovered more than \$3.6 million in Veterans Affairs claims for 5,685 U.S. Armed Forces Veterans and their families living in Arapahoe County.

The accredited Veterans Service Office serves as an advocate for Arapahoe County Veterans and their dependents and Officers assist with preparation and presentation of Veterans Affairs claims for which they may be eligible. Possible benefits include education, pension, service-connected disability compensation, survivor benefits, VA health care enrollment and burial. Some claims are one-time or retroactive payments while others will be paid to the Veteran annually.

"We are proud of the work done by our Veterans Service Office," said Commissioner Bill Holen, who is a Vietnam Veteran and represents District 5. "It is so important that we stand by the men and women who have served to protect our country and help them after their service. It can be a daunting task to process and navigate VA services and we are fortunate to have our Veterans Service Officers guiding our veterans and their families."

The County Veterans Service Office anticipates a similar number of veterans needing service in 2017; however, they expect a larger focus on health care benefits.

"We foresee a possible increase in the number of veterans needing assistance with Veterans Affairs health care and long-term care benefits in 2017," said T.J. Westphal, County Veterans Service Officer. "The new VA Medical Center (expected to be completed in 2018), potential changes to the Affordable Care Act and an aging wartime veteran population are primary factors that could contribute to this change. We hope to educate and assist our veteran community in navigating the complexities of veterans' health care."

Arapahoe County is home to more than 50,000 veterans, 40,000 veteran dependents and 15,000 active military at Buckley Air Force Base.

The Arapahoe County Veterans Service Office is located at 1690 W. Littleton Blvd., Suite 110, Littleton, 80120. To learn more or make an appointment with the Arapahoe County Veterans Service Office, call 303-738-8045 or visit www.arapahoegov.com/VeteransService.

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