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50th Anniversary Gala

On Saturday, February 26th, 2022 Buckeye PVA will be hosting its 50th Anniversary Gala celebration at the Hilton Cleveland Downtown! All Buckeye PVA members are encouraged to attend, so keep an eye on your mailbox for your invitation!

To be held at the Hilton Cleveland Downtown, this event will be a night to remember! Make sure to RSVP today, as only the first 350 individuals to RSVP will be able to attend. If you have any questions about The 50th Anniversary Gala, please contact the office at (216) 731-1017.
PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BUCKEYE CHAPTER
26250 Euclid Avenue, Suite 115, Euclid, Ohio 44132
(216) 731-1017 - (800) 248-2548
Email: Info@buckeyepva.org  www.buckeyepva.org

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DISCLAIMER
The Buckeye Banner is a publication of the Buckeye Chapter, PVA and is meant to inform its readers of Chapter activities, legislation, and other matters of concern to veterans and/or members of the disability community. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of BPVA, its Officers, Board Members, the Editor or production staff.

Revised 2/21
President’s Report

The leaves have fallen, the turkey is a pile of bones, the stores are going crazy with Christmas around the corner, and to top that off, it’s snowing. Just no end!

The chapter has been a little busy since the last newsletter. The usual: daily reports, yearly audits, and most importantly, answering our members’ questions and helping them out whenever possible. The Holiday Food cards have been sent out, and gifts have been ordered for the hospitalized members. We are also getting ready for our 50th Anniversary Gala in February. Members should have received invitations.

Lastly, we found time to look for and purchase our very own building. So finally, after 50 years of mostly renting, we’ll have our own place. The address is 2775 Bishop Road, Willoughby Hills, OH. Much more information will be coming soon.

As always, your concerns, issues, or ideas of how we may make our chapter better are always welcome.

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR

Sincerely,

Carl Harris
BPVA President
E: carlh@buckeyepva.org

A Note From Ellen Schwartz

Hi everyone! I hope you all had a safe, healthy, and happy fall. My daughters, Kennedy and Rae, stopped by the Chapter office recently and were thrilled to see all the fall décor and centerpieces for the various events the Chapter has been hosting—they also loved helping themselves to the bowls of chocolate that are in every room of the office. :) What I can I say, Maddi and I love chocolate!

In addition to making sure our candy dishes are well stocked, the Buckeye PVA office has been busy! This fall has been full of activity, to say the least. We had our All-You-Can-Eat fundraiser in Berea, fundraiser brunch at Lago East Bank in Cleveland, Dine to Donate days at multiple Melt Bar & Grilled locations throughout the state, the Fall Patricia Harris Caregiver Event in Cincinnati, the launch of our Holiday Food Coupon Program, and started planning our 50th Anniversary Gala—all in one season! One of our biggest goals over the next year is to spread our wings throughout the state of Ohio and reach our paralyzed veterans everywhere. If you aren’t already, please take the time to follow our social media and/or send your email in to the office. We are constantly posting and sending out information about activities across our great state! In addition, be on the lookout for an invitation to our upcoming gala. It will be a night full of celebration for the Chapter’s 50 years of accomplishments, and all that is to come.

Finally, I would like to give a brief shout-out to Maddi, our Marketing and Communications Manager. She celebrated her first anniversary with the Chapter on October 1. Without Maddi’s heart, passion, and talents, we would not be able to do all of the events and activities we have been able to do this year. We are lucky to have her as part of the Buckeye PVA family! Congrats, Maddi!

Happy Holidays everyone! Enjoy the family time, and we cannot wait to see you next year.

Best,

Ellen S. Schwartz
BPVA Executive Director
E: ellens@buckeyepva.org
A Note from Madalynne Snyder

by Madalynne Snyder
Marketing & Communications Manager

Buckeye Banner
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Brrrr!! It’s getting chilly here in Cleveland, and I am so ready to go sledding, drink hot cocoa, and cozy up on the couch to watch Christmas movies! Hopefully this year will be a bit more normal, and we can all see our families for the Holidays again!

The office has been busy as usual, and we are finishing up several events as well as gearing up for new ones! Planning for the 2022 Buckeye Wheelchair Games has begun, and I am so excited and excited to see an in-person games this year! I know it’s an event that the entire Chapter looks forward to, and I can’t wait to see it first-hand. I have so enjoyed meeting more of you and learning your stories, and I am hopeful that the events we have planned for 2022 will help me get to know even more of you!

October was my 1 year anniversary of working at Buckeye PVA, and the last 12 months have been absolutely extraordinary. From meeting more members, to planning new and exciting events, and offering more opportunities to stay connected on social media, it’s safe to say that I have found my niche here at Buckeye PVA. I would like to thank everyone who has made this last year so memorable for me, and a special shout out to Ellen, for being the best mentor and such an inspiring leader to this organization. I look forward to many more years with BPVA!

Sincerely,
Madalynne Snyder
Marketing & Communications Manager
E: maddis@buckeyepva.org

Mileage Reimbursement

Who is eligible to participate in the program?
Must be a BPVA Member in good standing for a minimum of 90 days to participate. The Committee has the option to make exceptions for extenuating circumstances.

What is the acceptable time period before the program becomes available for use?
The BPVA member must be hospitalized for a minimum of one week.

What is the acceptable distance for mileage reimbursement?
The mileage reimbursement will be given to visitors for travel to a VA hospital in the State of Ohio for the well-being of members who are hospitalized. Beginning and ending travel must be in the State of Ohio.

How much is the reimbursement?
Reimbursement will be at a rate of $0.20 per mile. Mileage will be determined via MapQuest based on the submission of the visitor of the beginning and ending address. Chapter will reimburse up to 2 trips per month with a $2,000 cap per year.

Reimbursement request containing the name of the member, name and address of the visitor, the date of visitation and the origin of the trip must be submitted by the 20th of the following month, with payment at the end of month. Request for reimbursement will only be valid for one calendar month following travel.

How will reimbursement be paid?
Reimbursements will be via check.

What locations are included in the program?
Reimbursement will be for Ohio VA hospitals only.

For more information contact the Chapter Office at 216-731-1017 or toll free at 800-248-2548.
BPVA Program for Vehicle Hand Controls

Since October 1, 2020, the Buckeye PVA has offered members in good standing of at least 90 days funding for assistance with the cost of hand controls and other adaptive driving controls in their personal automobile.

Chapter funding may be provided through application by any full voting BPVA member after all other funding is exhausted (i.e. VA). Member will be required to provide a written estimate and proof of any and all other funding.

For the Chapter to pay for installation of driving controls, there must be an understanding between the member and BPVA. The BPVA’s role is to only provide charitable funding. BPVA member must agree in writing that BPVA is only a funding source and carries no liability or obligation of any kind except for payment to the vendor for the controls. The vendor must be a NMEDA certified dealer.

At the time of application, and prior to BPVA making payment to the vendor pursuant to invoice, the member must provide the following:

1. Certificate of Insurance
2. Certification of driving evaluation on a case by case basis (done by the V.A.)
3. Current driver’s license front and back
4. Invoice from the vendor

Payment limits after all other sources have been applied is: up to $2,500 for para adaptation; up to $5,000 for quad adaptation. Payment will be made directly to the vendor.

If a member wants the Chapter to pay up to $2,500 to install the controls with self pay handling the rest, that is permissible. However, all funds would have to be paid to the dealer before the Chapter would provide funding.

This grant is available every 5 years.

Give us a call at (216) 731-1017, send us an email at info@buckeyepva.org, or head to our website at buckeyepva.org to get an application.

Greater Cincinnati including Dayton, Donate Today

Greater Cincinnati and Dayton, give G.I.V.E. a try and support veterans through a donation. Through the Paralyzed Veterans of America’s G.I.V.E. (Goods Inspiring Veterans Everywhere) clothing donation program, service never goes out of style.

Your generous donations of clothes, small appliances, and generally used household goods help improve the lives of severely injured veterans and strengthens the fabric of our community. Plus, your donations are tax deductible – a receipt will be issued upon pickup/drop off.

In Ohio, this service is only available in the Greater Cincinnati/Dayton area, but is expanding to different locations. Stay tuned for an area near you!

To donate, call (314) 416-1300 or visit the website for more information: www.pva.org/ways-to-give/give/give-clothing.
Buckeye PVA was excited to bring its 2nd Caregiver Event of 2021 to Cincinnati for a day filled with wine tastings, delicious food, and many friendships made! Hosted at Oakley Wines, the Fall Caregiver Event went off without a hitch. With 10 Caregivers in attendance, the cozy wine shop was the perfect backdrop for an afternoon of charcuterie boards, bingo, and wine bottle decorating! Each attendee received a wine bottle to decorate in a way that expresses who they are and every single bottle was adorned with stickers, gems, and positive words, showing just how thoughtful and unique each of our Caregivers are!

If you or someone you know would be interested in attending a Caregiver Event in the future, please reach out to the office at (216) 731-1017. Buckeye PVA plans to offer more events like these in 2022 at different locations around the State of Ohio!

Cheers!
Deli Days: Coming to a Location Near You!

Our first Deli Days outing was a great success!
The first Deli Days meet up was in the Akron/Canton Area on Monday, September 27th, at Jerzee’s Café! Attendees enjoyed lunch on the Chapter and time to reconnect with fellow members.
If you missed this one, don’t worry! Deli Days will be a series of dates through 2021-2023, where members and staff can meet to enjoy some delicious food and good conversation all over the Buckeye State. The schedule for the next Deli Days outings are as follows:
1. Chillicothe – January 2022
2. Parma – March 2022
3. Dayton – May 2022
4. Youngstown - July 2022
5. Cincinnati – September 2022
6. Toledo/Sandusky – November 2022
7. Geneva – January 2023
8. Mansfield – March 2023
9. Columbus – May 2023
10. Cleveland – July 2023

If you would like to attend the upcoming Deli Days outings, keep an eye out in your email or mailbox for more information on when we might be in your area! If you have questions about these events, please call the office at (216) 731-1017.

We hope to see you next time!
National Director’s Report

2021 National PVA Fall Board of Directors
Meeting
October 18-20, 2021
Orlando, Florida

On Monday Oct 17 the BOD roll call was taken and the BOD sworn in. Followed by reports from the Executive Committee. The afternoon consisted of reports of the Audit Committee, An update on Chapter issues and the Judicial Committee. We also went through the Consent Agenda where one item was moved out to be heard as a proposed resolution. The Communications Director, Liz Deakin, gave a report on the DRTV venture that PVA has undertaken.

On Tuesday the BOD heard the presentation from Executive Staff and PVA’s Broker about the sale of the building at 801 18th St, Washington, DC. This building has been the location of the PVA National Headquarters since 1981. We were given the details on two options for the location of the new National Office to discuss. The BOD voted on option 1 with is located 1/2 block from the current location. PVA will lease an entire floor in the new building. Plans are underway to construct the space to PVA’s specific needs. We heard the report from the Executive Director and the National Staff.

On Wednesday we went through the Resolutions and the outcome is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resolution</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Outcome</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21-0-1</td>
<td>Article X-Meetings of the Board of Directors</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-0-2</td>
<td>Formation of an MS Committee</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-0-3</td>
<td>Election of Officers Modification</td>
<td>Sent to Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-0-4</td>
<td>Judicial Committee Procedure Clarification</td>
<td>Failed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-0-5</td>
<td>Increase Minimum Amount for Non-Receipt Expense Reporting</td>
<td>Consent Agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-0-6 (S)</td>
<td>Hierarchy of Authority to Transfer or Withdraw Funds</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-0-7</td>
<td>PVA Legislative and Disability Issues Policy</td>
<td>Failed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-0-8</td>
<td>Amending PVA’s Charter</td>
<td>Withdrawn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-0-0-1</td>
<td>Chapter Discretionary Gift Policy and Procedure</td>
<td>Tabled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-0-0-2</td>
<td>Bod Access to Staff Salary Ranges</td>
<td>Failed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-0-0-3</td>
<td>Unrestricted Portion of BOD Designated Reserve</td>
<td>Passed</td>
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Last order of business was the Speedy Award, there were four nominations in the Member Category, Dr. Rory Cooper, Craig Enenbach, Ann Robinson, and John Snyder. The Speedy Award was given to Dr. Rory Cooper and Posthumously to John Snyder. There were no nominations for a Non-Member.
The VA has several programs providing financial, medical, and other assistance to veterans such as disability compensation, veteran’s pension programs, free or low-cost medical care through VA hospitals and medical facilities, education programs, housing and home loan guarantees, job training, small businesses and business loans, and burials and memorials. However, the one which I find most often under used and misunderstood is Individual Total Disability Unemployability benefits (TDIU). It can be a challenge to explain in plain language exactly how TDIU works and when and how a veteran may be found eligible because of the different components of the benefit and how it takes employment into account.

TDIU benefits are for veterans that cannot keep or obtain gainful employment because of mental and physical impairments that are deemed service connected by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) (marginal employment, such as odd jobs, is not considered substantial gainful employment for VA purposes). You must also meet the following minimum requirements under 38 CFR § 4.16:

- You must be a veteran
- You must have service-connected disabilities
- You must not have been dishonorably discharged
- You must have at least one service-connected disability rated at least at 60%, OR two or more service-connected disabilities at least one disability ratable at 40% or more with a combined rating of 70% or more.

When a veteran satisfies these two conditions, then he/she will be entitled to a 100% disability rating, even though he does not satisfy that 100% disability rating under the schedule.

If you feel you meet the above criteria and requirements, and wish to pursue a claim for TDIU, I will first suggest speaking with your appointed Veteran Service Officer for a thorough review of your individual case and situation. If your representative finds you do meet the above qualifications, he/she will then submit an initial application (VAF 21-526EZ) to the Veterans Administration along with VAF 21-8940 (Veterans Application for Increased Compensation Based on Unemployability). Depending on the whether you already have qualifying disabilities or if the record already supports you are unemployed primarily because of your service-connected disabilities, VA may schedule you for a VA examination with a provider to determine if you are unemployed primarily because of your service-connected disabilities. If you recently left a job, VA would request information about your employment and the reasons you left your employment by sending your last employer VAF 21-4192 (Request for Employment Information in Connection with Claim for Disability Benefits). A final decision will be dependent on your service-connected disabilities and whether they meet the minimum criteria for entitlement to TDIU, the results of the VA exam (are you unemployed primarily because of your service-connected disabilities, and or the information returned to VA by your last employer, if there is/was one.

As you can see, TDIU can be a complicated benefit to pursue, but beneficial and a life changing benefit to a person who is unemployed primarily because of their service-connected disabilities.

It is also important to remember that even if a person fails to meet the minimum criteria described above yet finds him/herself unemployed because of a service-connected benefit rated less than 60 percent or a combined 70 percent rate, the VA must still consider your claim under extra schedular criteria. This simply means It is the established policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs that all veterans who are unable to secure and follow a substantially gainful occupation by reason of service-connected disabilities shall be rated totally disabled. Therefore, rating boards should submit to the Director, Compensation Service, for extraschedular consideration all cases of veterans who are unemployed by reason of service-connected disabilities, but who fail to meet the percentage standards set forth under 38 CFR § 4.16. The rating board will include a full statement as to the veteran’s service-connected disabilities, employment history, educational and vocational attainment and all other factors having a bearing on the issue.

Again, if you think this is a benefit you may be eligible for and would like to apply for the benefit, please contact your local Veteran Service Officer to schedule and in person or phone appointment to review and discuss your case.
We Proudly Support the

Paralyzed Veterans of America
BUCKEYE CHAPTER

Improving the Lives of Those Who Have Protected Ours

PRESTON Superstore
13600 W. Center Street
Burton, OH 44021
440-834-9700

PRESTONSUPERSTORE.COM
OSU Buckeye PVA Recognition Day

Saturday, November 13, five members of Buckeye PVA had the unique experience of attending an Ohio State University (OSU) football game, where they were welcomed onto the field during the Military Appreciation Salute! Members Scott Law, Arsenio Rodriguez, Milton Young, Samuel Johnson, and Dale Spiller received recognition for their service and adorned OSU and Buckeye PVA gear, representing the Buckeye state and Buckeye Chapter.

OSU holds several Veterans events throughout the year and at different sporting events, such as basketball, soccer, volleyball, wrestling, and more! Their mission is to honor and support both current and former members of the United States Armed Forces by engaging them in meaningful events and experiences.

Not only does OSU offer these incredible experiences, but they also have benefits available to all current and former serving military members with a Military ID. Each individual with a Military ID can receive 2 free tickets to specific sporting events listed on their website, as well as 10% discount at all concession stands!

Buckeye PVA would like to thank the athletic office of The Ohio State University for offering such a memorable experience for our members, and hope to get involved in future sporting events as well!

Go Bucks!
Code of Honor Rugby Tournament

By Paul Mann
Co-Sports Director

On the weekend of October 12th, Buckeye PVA Board member and Co-Sports Director, Paul Mann, traveled to the PVA Code of Honor Rugby Tournament in Raleigh, North Carolina. The tournament began on Friday, October 11th, with 17 teams traveling from Texas, Florida, and states all along the East Coast. Paul’s team, the Oscar Mike Militia, played two matches on Friday, two on Saturday, and one on Sunday, finishing 2-3 in the competitive tournament! Great job, and congratulations to Paul and his team!

Sports & Recreation Report

by Scott Law
Co-Sports Director

Seasons greetings to our members and their families,
I hope everyone is well and staying warm.

There is not much to report on in regards to Sports and Recreation as of late. The chapter was given the opportunity to participate in a “Tribute to Military Service” at a recent OSU game at the “Shoe”. A handful of Board Members were honored to represent the Buckeye Chapter PVA on the field early in the second quarter. It was a very emotional experience to say the least.

On another note, it looks like Air Rifle Postal Match Competition might be starting soon, more information will be provided.

We at the Chapter would like to wish everyone a very happy and healthy holiday season!

See you all soon,

Scott Law
Sports Director
E: scottl@buckeyepva.org
Connect With What Matters

Being there makes a difference

It could be a simple trip to the mall, a ride to the movies or just a visit to friend’s home. The little things in life can make a big difference. It’s why MobilityWorks® has been helping veterans connect with who and what matters most since 1997. Veteran have unique needs so we treat each of them as individuals. First of all, we listen. Then, we work together to find the best solution.

MobilityWorks considers it a privilege to help our nation’s veterans. Every day we work with local VISNs and service organizations to make the process of securing accessible vehicles, lifts and driving equipment for veterans as easy as possible.

MobilityWorks has more than 90 locations across the country with the largest selection of accessible vehicles and adaptive solutions:
- Converted minivans and full-size vans, and SUVs — Chrysler, Dodge, Ford, Honda and Toyota
- Pre-owned accessible vehicles
- The latest in adaptive technology including transfer and turning seats, scooter lifts and hand controls
- Complete maintenance and service on adaptive driving equipment, lifts and conversions
- Daily, weekly and long term rental vans
- Financing options to fit your personal needs
- 24-hour roadside assistance with wheelchair transportation

MobilityWorks is committed to serving you. Contact us today so we can evaluate your needs and find a solution that best fits your lifestyle.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Akron</th>
<th>Bedford Heights</th>
<th>Columbus / Plain City</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>810 Moe Dr. Akron, OH 44310 330-247-6295</td>
<td>5040 Richmond Rd. Bedford Heights, OH 44146 440-305-8995</td>
<td>7233 Industrial Pkwy Plain City, OH 43064 614-289-8138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dayton</td>
<td>Sharonville</td>
<td>Toledo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Certified Mobility Consultants Provide Comprehensive Needs Analysis
Scooter lifts, turning seats, and driving accessories
Government Relations Director

Fellow Buckeyes and Supporters Buckeye PVA,

I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving. This issue of the Banner will show you Buckeye PVA has much to be thankful for because of all of you. So, thank you!

One area we as a chapter could use some assistance with is Government Advocacy. Advocacy is much larger than just one person so, I want to introduce you all to an advocacy program you can assist with from the comfort of your home. I am talking about PVAction Force and asking for your assistance in signing up and becoming active. I have included a description of the program right from PVA National’s website and a QR Code for easy access. The website below also provides a brief tutorial and walks you through participating in this grassroots effort.

Please take time to follow the link provided above and let your elected leaders know what issues are important to members of Paralyzed Veterans of America. Also, if you need help accessing the website or signing up for PVAction Force, please get a hold of our office, and someone would be glad to assist you.

Advocacy works when we join all our voices together!

I would also like to take this time to wish you all the best during this holiday season. Please be safe and be sure to reach out if you should need any assistance during this period. I look forward to seeing you all next year as we celebrate our chapter’s Semicentennial Anniversary or Golden Jubilee. Fifty years of service! Thank you all so much! I hope to see all of you at the 50th Gala Celebration in February and various events throughout

Respectfully,

Joey Myers
Government Relations Director
E: joeym@buckeyepva.org
Quotes from Military Appreciation Month

Meet BPVA Board Member Holly Koester and her incredible family! Together, they compete as the Koester Team at the Indy Mini Marathon, Air Force Marathon, and Cleveland Turkey Trot.

“Many thanks to CJ - USAF, my roommate, two sisters Joy- USA and KC- USMC, Neil (USN) -brother, nephews Jared & Liz, Trevor, Michael and Llyod, and niece Megan. Planning on many more rides together.” — Holly Koester.

BPVA Board member, Lucas Meyer, talked about two family members who have supported him during his time as a BPVA member.

"Since I have been injured by two sisters, Kia and Trisha (and their husbands), have been a huge help in just about every facet of my life. Whether it be transportation, things around the house, or anything else, they have always been there for me! I wouldn't know what to do without them. There aren't enough thanks to making up for everything they have done for me! I hope they know that everything they do is more than appreciated!!" — Lucas Meyer

Board Member and Co-Sports Director, Paul Mann, would like to show his appreciation for his grandfather, Bernard Mann, who served in the Army at Guadalcanal during WWII.

“This picture has 4 generations of the Mann Family!” — Paul
**Washington Update**

**HOUSE HEARING LOOKS AT VA EFFORTS TO MODERNIZE ITS MEDICAL SUPPLY CHAIN**

On November 18, the House Veterans’ Affairs, Oversight and Investigations and Information Technology Subcommittees held a hearing looking at VA’s efforts to modernize its medical supply chain system. VA has long faced challenges in achieving efficient acquisitions and a recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report says the department’s lethargic efforts to modernize its supply chain may now be putting the quality of veterans’ health care at risk.

Many of the findings of this report were addressed during the hearing, including VA’s failure to fully enact GAO recommendations to improve acquisition management at VA and the absence of a comprehensive plan to implement a new system. Throughout the hearing, lawmakers expressed concern with the cost of developing a new program, numerous managerial problems, and the lack of clarity as to whether the Defense Medical Logistics Standard Support (DMLSS) or prime vendor systems are suitable for use by VA for its future supply system.

The COVID-19 pandemic exasperated VA’s supply woes. Too many PVA members have experienced problems with VA filling prescriptions for critical items needed for veterans to perform wound and bowel and bladder care at home. We shared this information with congressional staff in advance of the hearing along with word that VA is experiencing shortages of wheelchair parts, durable medical equipment, and even lab specimen tubes. The staff appreciated our inputs and are looking into the issues raised. The hearing was recorded and can be viewed at [https://veterans.house.gov/events/hearings/modernizing-vas-medical-supply-chain_progress-made](https://veterans.house.gov/events/hearings/modernizing-vas-medical-supply-chain_progress-made).

**AMTRAK INVESTMENTS UNDER BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW**

On November 15, President Biden signed the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act into law. Among its many provisions, the legislation provides Amtrak with an investment of $66 billion to eliminate its maintenance backlog, modernize the Northeast Corridor, and improve rail service in areas outside the northeast and mid-Atlantic. Within these totals, $22 billion would be provided as grants to Amtrak; $24 billion as federal-state partnership grants for Northeast Corridor modernization; $12 billion for partnership grants for intercity rail service, including high-speed rail; $5 billion for rail improvement and safety grants; and $3 billion for grade crossing safety improvements. The legislation also expands Amtrak’s Board to add a position for a disability advocate.

According to an inspector general report from September 2021, Amtrak has made progress on overdue Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance requirements. Amtrak reported that the ADA requires that 516 stations across its rail network be compliant. It is responsible for making various combinations of station components accessible at individual stations, including the station structure, train platform, and parking area. Based on federal regulation and lease agreements with third parties, Amtrak has determined it has sole and shared responsibility for 386 of these stations. Over the next six years, Amtrak will embark on a plan to bring more than 300 stations into ADA compliance.
Washington Update Cont.

INDEPENDENT BUDGET AND OTHER VSOs RAISE NEED FOR CONGRESS TO FINALIZE VA BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022

On November 10, the Independent Budget veterans service organizations (VSO), PVA, DAV, and VFW, along with five other VSOs sent a letter to Senate leadership to express serious concerns about reports that the Senate was considering approving a full-year continuing resolution (CR) to fund the federal government for the remainder of fiscal year (FY) 2022. A full-year CR would have significant negative consequences for veterans, their families, caregivers, and survivors. FY 2022 began on October 1. Congress passed a continuing resolution.

PVA WEIGHS IN ON PENDING VETERANS LEGISLATION

On November 17, the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee held a hearing on pending legislation. PVA submitted a statement for the record to provide our views on some of the 22 bills included in the hearing. We strongly supported several bills, including S. 2513, the Brian Neuman Department of Veterans Affairs Clothing Allowance Improvement Act of 2021, which would allow eligible veterans to be automatically enrolled in the clothing allowance program, eliminating the burden of having to reapply each year. This would have a big impact on many PVA members.

We also supported S. 1607, the Student Veterans Transparency and Protection Act of 2021, which would improve data-sharing between VA and the Department of Education, so VA would have more data for the GI Bill Comparison Tool. It would also reinstate education benefits to students who experienced predatory behavior from certain schools.

Another bill we supported was S. 1664, the Department of Veterans Affairs Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Processing Claims Improvement Act of 2021, which would improve training for claims processors who review PTSD disability benefit claims and establish a formal process that identifies future training needs to avoid inaccurately processed and unjustly denied claims.

PVA SUBMITS STATEMENT IN HOUSE MST HEARING

On November 17, PVA submitted a statement for the record for a joint House Veterans’ Affairs, Disability Assistance and Memorial Affairs and Health Subcommittees hearing titled, “Supporting Survivors: Assessing VA’s Military Sexual Trauma (MST) Programs.” PVA’s statement focused on a set of VA Office of Inspector General reports that relayed the department’s shortcomings in MST claims process. Our statement stressed the importance of raters and clinicians being aware of the complicated conditions of veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders and other disabilities who might file MST claims.

Representative Raul Ruiz (D-CA) referred to our statement when questioning witnesses, asking if VA offered specialized training for staff when it comes to complexities often seen in veterans with serious disabilities. VA stressed the importance of training, but PVA believes more work needs to be done in this area to ensure that veterans with complex disabilities receive equitable support when filing MST claims. You can watch the hearing at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqB2_gctI5A.
WASHINGTON UPDATE CONT.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT SUES UBER FOR OVERCHARGING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Justice Department has filed a lawsuit under the ADA against Uber Technologies Inc. (Uber) for charging “wait time” fees to passengers who, because of disability, need more time to enter a vehicle. In April 2016, Uber began charging passengers wait time fees in a number of cities, eventually expanding the policy nationwide. Wait time fees start two minutes after the Uber vehicle arrives at the pickup location and are charged until the vehicle begins its trip. The department’s complaint alleges that Uber violates the ADA by failing to reasonably modify its wait time fee policy for passengers who, because of disability, need more than two minutes to get in an Uber vehicle. Passengers with disabilities may need additional time to enter a vehicle for various reasons. A passenger may, for example, use a wheelchair or walker that needs to be broken down and stored in the vehicle. The department’s lawsuit alleges that, even when Uber is aware that a passenger’s need for additional time is clearly disability-based, Uber starts charging a wait time fee at the two-minute mark.

The lawsuit seeks relief from the court, including ordering Uber to stop discriminating against individuals with disabilities. Additionally, the department asks the court to order Uber to modify its wait time fee policy to comply with the ADA; train its staff and drivers on the ADA; pay money damages to people subjected to the illegal wait time fees; and pay a civil penalty to vindicate the public’s interest in eliminating disability discrimination.

Anyone who may have been charged wait time fees, should contact the Justice Department at 833-591-0425 (toll-free), 202-305-6786, or send an email to Uber.Fee@usdoj.gov. The complaint can be viewed at https://www.ada.gov/uber_comp.pdf.

NEW STRATEGY FOR REDUCING MILITARY AND VETERAN SUICIDE

The Administration recently unveiled a new plan aimed at ending veteran and military suicide nationwide. It is pillar ed by five priorities: improving lethal means safety; enhancing crisis care and facilitating care transitions; increasing access to and delivery of effective care; addressing upstream risk and protective factors; and increasing research coordination, data sharing, and evaluation efforts. The new plan calls for federal agencies, including the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Justice, Health and Human Services, VA, and Transportation, to create public awareness campaigns to encourage safer storage of guns and training for counselors, crisis responders, and others. Another key part of the strategy focuses on reducing barriers to high quality mental health care and encouraging help-seeking among service members, veterans, and their families. This could include, but is not limited to, eliminating or lowering co-payments for mental health treatment, increasing confidentiality, clarifying fitness for duty standards, and training of providers in evidence-based suicide risk assessment and care. This would be coupled with similar efforts to limit risk factors like increased financial strain, lack of housing, food insecurity, unemployment, and legal issues—all of which may contribute to or increase the risk for suicide.

PROTECTION OF SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS RESTORATION ACT REINTRODUCED

On November 4, Representatives Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ) and John B. Larson (D-CT), Chair of the House Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Social Security, reintroduced the Protection of Social Security Benefits Restoration Act, H.R. 5866. This legislation would restore federal protections for Social Security benefits to prevent the federal government from garnishing them for the repayment of all non-tax federal debt—such as student loans. Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, introduced companion legislation (S. 3177)
in the Senate. According to a September 2016 GAO report, the number of retirees and people with disabilities whose Social Security benefits were seized by the government to pay off student loans increased more than fivefold between 2002 and 2016. While the Department of Education put a pause on collecting student loan payments due to the pandemic, the department is prepared to resume them at the end of January, including those for seniors. In addition to protecting Social Security benefits, the bill also protects railroad retirement and black lung benefits. More information is available at this link: https://grijalva.house.gov/sen-wyden-and-reps-grijalva-larson-reintroduce-the-protection-of-social-security-benefits-restoration-act/

“Veteran Finder” App Launched

On Veterans Day, Together We Served launched a “Veteran Finder” app to help connect veterans with people they served with. You can learn more about the free app which was specially designed for Android and Apple mobile phones here: https://blogs.va.gov/VAntage/97038/together-we-served-launches-new-veteran-finder-app-for-veterans-day/?utm_source=Feature&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=VetResources&utm_id=10NOV2021.

U.S. Access Board Hosts Virtual Event on Architectural Trends and Social Justice


Mathematica and Dole Foundation Release Report on Young Caregivers of Veterans

On November 10, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation and Mathematica Research released a new report that shows children who live with and help care for wounded, injured, or ill service members or veterans face local and national barriers to speedy, high quality support for themselves. Hidden Helpers, as they are called in the report, take on considerable responsibilities compared with their peers, ranging from household chores to physical and emotional caregiving duties and childrearing responsibilities for siblings. They require significant support themselves to grow up healthy and thrive, but their needs are often superseded by those of the people they care for.

Myths About ADA Enforcement

In “DeBunking Disability Enforcement Myths,” two University of Pennsylvania law professors examine some of the most troubling and intransigent misrepresentations about disability rights enforcement. Among these are: filing a disability law suit is taking advantage of the system; the ADA is the source of much predatory litigation; and stopping or delaying ADA lawsuits is the only way to protect small businesses from these abusive practices.

PVA’s NDEAM Webinar Recording Now Available

On October 26, PVA hosted a webinar in honor of National Disability Employment Awareness Month. PVA’s webinar featured Susan Prokop, PVA’s National Advocacy Director, and PVA’s Veterans Career Program staff who shared their insights and experiences on the employment of veterans with disabilities. The webinar is available for viewing here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z1MZxp7qvmU.
Community Emergency Treatment Reporting and Care Coordination Information for Veterans

During a medical or mental health emergency, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) encourages Veterans to seek immediate medical attention without delay. Veterans do not need to check with VA before calling for an ambulance or going to an emergency department. In most instances eligible Veterans are able to receive VA-authoriz ed emergency care at an in-network facility if VA is notified of the emergent event within 72 hours of the start of care.

It is important that your visit to a community emergency room be reported to VA as soon as possible because it allows VA to assist in coordinating your care or transfer, and it helps ensure that administrative and clinical requirements for VA to pay for the care are met.

Inform your Emergency Provider to Report Your Emergency Treatment to VA


- They also need to contact the local VA medical center (VAMC) to coordinate follow-on care and transfer activities, if necessary.

  - Phone numbers and email addresses to local VAMCs are available at https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/docs/providers/Care-Coordination_Facility-Contacts.pdf.

Veterans, someone acting on the covered Veteran's behalf, or the eligible entity or provider can also report episodes of emergency care to the appropriate VA official at the nearest VA facility. However, VA should only be notified once and ideally that notification is from community facility staff where the Veteran is being treated.

For more information, visit https://www.va.gov/communitycare/programs/veterans/emergency_care.asp.
About George Music Company

Welcome to Akron’s finest entertainment company. We are a locally owned family operated company serving the Northeast Ohio area since 1933. We offer the absolute finest, most up-to-date equipment available along with providing a strong dedication to the success of our customers. Our State of the art entertainment solutions are specifically tailored to meet our customers’ individual needs.

George Music Company provides the latest in digital internet jukeboxes, NGX Jukeboxes, Touch Tunes Jukeboxes, skill games and amusement machines to bars, taverns, pubs, restaurants, bowling alleys, universities, and social clubs. We install and service Internet Jukeboxes in Bars, Taverns, Fraternal Organizations, anywhere. Delivery and setup is also available (call for details). George Music Company only provides service on what we sell. We also sell used coin-operated machines for the home.

As you can see, we are the premier amusement supplier in the Akron and surrounding area. To increase revenue and keep your customers entertained and satisfied, call George Music Company and find out how you can add excellent entertainment equipment to your establishment.

Want to enhance the atmosphere of your tavern or bar?

Call (330) 923-9868 or toll free at 1-800-492-9507
Getting Paralyzed Veterans Walking Again with Indego®

New VA Program offers eligible veterans an Indego® Exoskeleton at no cost.

What is Indego?

A robotic device that enables veterans to walk again.

Indego is an FDA-approved exoskeleton worn around the waist and legs that enables individuals paralyzed from spinal cord injuries to stand and walk, offering a new level of independence.

Indego can currently be used with spinal cord injury levels of T3 to L5 in community or home settings.

Free Indego Webinars

During the first Thursday of every month you can join a free live webinar to learn more about the Indego and hear from a veteran who owns a device already.

Contact us today to reserve your spot or find out if you are eligible to receive an Indego exoskeleton at no cost.

Email: support.indego@parker.com
Phone: 844-846-3346

Watch Marine Veteran Steve Holbert’s story at www.indego.com/veterans
Emergency Assistance Program

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Buckeye Chapter has available an Emergency Assistance Program.

This program helps members of the Buckeye Chapter who may find themselves in financial distress causing possible eviction from their homes, disconnection of utilities or the inability to pay for food.

Members must be in good standing for a minimum of 90 days prior to qualifying for consideration. Application for help is limited to twice yearly or up to a maximum of $500 per year. This is a confidential process. Payments must be made directly to the vendor. Please contact the Chapter office for more details. (800) 248-2548 or (216) 731-1017.

PLEASE REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE NOT ALONE... WE ARE ALWAYS HERE FOR YOU.

VA Emergency Care

In most instances, Veterans are eligible to receive VA authorized emergency care at an in-work facility if the VA is notified of the emergency event within 72 hrs. Veterans do not need to check with the VA before going to an emergency department in the community or calling an ambulance and, during an emergency, veterans are encouraged to seek medical attention without delay.

To simplify and streamline this emergency care notification process, VA established a national emergency care contact center.

This center allows community providers to report instances of a Veteran presenting to a community emergency department and offers simplified access to VA for care coordination, eligibility determination, and payment authorization information.

The person notifying the VA should be prepared to supply case-specific information, as seen below.

For more information please visit: https://www.va.gov/COMMUNITYCARE/providers/info_EmergencyCare.asp

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Veteran Information</th>
<th>Treating Facility Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>National Provider Identifier (NPI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Security Number</td>
<td>Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
<td>Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Point of Contact (POC) Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date Presenting to Facility</td>
<td>POC Phone#</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Discharge</td>
<td>POC Email Address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admitted? (YES/NO)</td>
<td>Note: POC will receive VA authorization decision info</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief Complaint/Admission DX and/or Discharge DX</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
On Saturday, October 2nd, Buckeye PVA held its annual All-You-Can-Eat Fundraiser & Raffle! With over 100 in attendance, Buckeye PVA supporters helped raise over $8,000.00 for the Chapter!

Each raffle basket has been filled with donations from local small businesses, museums, art galleries, and many more! Donors for this year’s raffle include:

- **American Greetings**
- **Goodtime III**
- **Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum**
- **Akron Symphony**
- **The Cleveland Cavaliers**
- **Kalahari Resorts**
- **Clague Playhouse**
- **Akron Zoo**
- **The JACK Racino**
- **Cleveland Metroparks**
- **Rock N Roll Hall of Fame**
- **CJ Barnes**
- **Petitti Garden Center**
- **Sherwin Williams**
- **The Callahan Family**
- **George Music Company**
- **Great Wolf Lodge**
- **Music Box Supper Club**
- **Mitchell’s Ice Cream**
- **Doug Beckley**
- **Rutherford B. Hayes Center**
- **Memphis Kiddie Park**
- **Old Firehouse Winery**
- **Gervasi Vineyards**
- **USS Cod Sub Memorial**
- **And more!**

Buckeye PVA would like to thank all of its generous donors and supporters who made this event possible, as well as Tony K’s Bar & Grille, for their excellent service and delicious food!
STROKE REHABILITATION STUDY

The Louis Stokes Cleveland VA Medical Center

If you had a stroke more than 6 months ago, you may be a candidate for a research study assessing the effects of innovative training techniques to improve walking ability.

Study participants receive treatments that include Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation therapy and Virtual Reality Gait Training therapy. Study participants include veterans, non-veterans, men and women.

For further information please contact:

Brain Rehab Research Programs
216-791-3800 ext. 63830

Veterans Health Administration
Research & Development

[Logos]
clevelandFEScenter
Paralyzed Veterans of America
Vehicle Donation Program

Turn Your Used Vehicle
Into Support for Paralyzed Veterans of America

We’ll use the proceeds from the sale of your car, truck, RV or boat to change lives and build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes.

Donating your car is easy, and your gift is tax-deductible

Vehicle donations to PVA are tax-deductible! Most vehicles are sold through local used-car markets. Our vehicle donation program works to get the highest return per vehicle and handles all the paperwork, too! Whether your vehicle sells for $500 or less, more than $5000, or more than $50000, you will be provided with the proper donation tax receipt(s).

Call 877-900-VETS or donate online at pva.careasy.org
### Member Birthdays

#### December
- Lawrence Wheeler
- William Butler
- Ronald Dossenback
- Eric Johnson
- Holly Koester
- Angelo Zayas
- Joseph Wittkamp
- Donald Pressly
- Janet Suszynski
- Steven Franko
- Patrick Harrison
- Milton Young
- John Turchan
- David Miller
- Charles Green
- Philip Kearney
- Ken Debelak
- Levar Davenport
- Desiree Douglas
- Eugene Walker
- Garth Jones
- Nathan Swenson
- Richard Chavers
- Richard Rumpke
- Christie MacMurray
- Christopher Johnson
- Len Kelly
- Monika Gibson
- Chris Howell

#### January
- Henry Johnson
- Gary Waldfogel
- Isaac Young
- William Kerns
- Richard Fiacco
- Dale Spiller
- Carl Pierson
- Douglas Beckley
- Wilson Hetrick
- David Nau
- Richard Olsen
- Robert Matthews
- Charles Smith
- Lucy Works
- Gary Fluharty
- Kenneth Rice
- Jeffrey Hamilton
- Bill Ware
- Robert Gray
- Timothy Jackson
- Martin Molina
- Mark Mix
- Theodore Keener
- Michael Lipps
- Daniel Ohar
- Loren Collins
- Harry Forrester
- Joseph Gavigan
- David Bailey
- James Hodge
- Larry Backulich
- Mark Riddle
- Dennis Brostek
- James Kelley
- Wayne Blount
- Benjamin Gochett
- Michael Enos
- George Duke

#### February
- Carl Harris
- Douglas Howell
- Margaret Morefield
- Thomas Paumier
- William Edwards
- Robert Fown
- Timothy Logan
- Roger Tackett
- Ronald Wood
- Kelly Knox
- Steven Thacker
- Mark Murray
- Jared McCoppin
- Celeste Phelps
- Eddie Powell
- Terry Denlinger
- Paul Turner
- Allen Barber
- Ronald Scarberry
- James Philson
- Dale Raffner
- Tyrone Wilson
- Mike Patterson
- Fred Motzko
- Thomas Wilson
- Artie Sias
- Kevin Palmer
- Ralph Roberts
- John Hollins
- Joseph Myers
- Bertrand Bumpas
- Patrick Glass
- William Chesser
Help Us Serve America’s Veterans

Health Care, Benefits, Advocacy, Sports, Recreation, Education are just a few of the programs your tax-deductible contributions help support.

For more information, call (800) 248-2548 or visit www.buckeyepva.org