

Interior Alaska Veterans Cemetery Design and Planning

FY2011 Request: \$6,000,000

Reference No: 47882

AP/AL: Appropriation

Project Type: Construction

Category: Health/Human Services

Location: Fairbanks Areawide

Contact: McHugh Pierre

House District: Fairbanks Areawide (HD 7-11)

Contact Phone: (907)428-6003

Estimated Project Dates: 07/01/2010 - 06/30/2015

Brief Summary and Statement of Need:

Alaska veterans are in need of a U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs certified cemetery in the interior region of our state. As the veteran population continues to grow, access to the hard-earned burial rights becomes harder to obtain. The purpose of this project is to design and construct a dedicated state veterans cemetery in or near Fairbanks on donated land. Veterans in this region must travel 350 miles to Anchorage to the nearest veterans' cemetery with available grave space. The next nearest dedicated national veterans cemetery is in Sitka, 750 miles away and can only be reached by air or boat/ship. This project will support the department priority program to support veterans and military families.

Funding:	<u>FY2011</u>	<u>FY2012</u>	<u>FY2013</u>	<u>FY2014</u>	<u>FY2015</u>	<u>FY2016</u>	<u>Total</u>
Fed Rcpts	\$5,000,000						\$5,000,000
G/F Match	\$750,000						\$750,000
Gen Fund	\$250,000						\$250,000
Total:	\$6,000,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$6,000,000

<input type="checkbox"/> State Match Required	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-Time Project	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - new	<input type="checkbox"/> Phased - underway	<input type="checkbox"/> On-Going
0% = Minimum State Match % Required		<input type="checkbox"/> Amendment	<input type="checkbox"/> Mental Health Bill	

Operating & Maintenance Costs:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Staff</u>
Project Development:	0	0
Ongoing Operating:	0	0
One-Time Startup:	0	0
Totals:	0	0

Additional Information / Prior Funding History:

No prior funding history. These funds are required to reflect the state's commitment to future operations to leverage \$5 million in federal funds.

Project Description/Justification:

The purpose of this project is to fund the planning and design of a dedicated state veterans cemetery in or near Fairbanks. The state has the unique opportunity to leverage federal funding reimbursement in the future to offset operating costs, and \$5 million in construction costs, contingent upon the state's commitment to ongoing operations and maintenance of the facility. With state funding support, federal funds may be available for community support of the facility as well. (See Funding section below.)

Background

Veterans in this region must travel 350 miles to Anchorage, the nearest veterans' cemetery with available grave space. The next nearest dedicated national veterans' cemetery is in Sitka, over 750 miles away and can only be reached by air or boat/ship.

The Fairbanks area has the second densest population of veterans in Alaska. There are an estimated 11,000 veterans who reside within a radius of 75 miles centered in the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) and are not served by a veterans' cemetery. Additionally, Fairbanks is centrally located in the interior portion of Alaska and is an air and road hub to many smaller, outlying villages on and off the road system, none of which have a veterans' cemetery. The FNSB is also home to Fort Wainwright Army Base, Eielson Air Force Base and is within 75 miles of Clear Air Force Station.

The United States Veterans Administration estimates that 1,500 veterans will pass away over the next ten years in areas located within 75 miles of the Fairbanks area. It is also estimated that 50% of those veterans would seek burial in a new state veterans' cemetery. In addition, one family member for each two veterans would also seek burial in the cemetery. It is estimated that there would be approximately 1,125 eligible persons seeking burial over the next ten years, with an average of approximately 112 seeking burial each year.

Funding

It is estimated that the construction of the cemetery would be completed and ready for operations in FY2014. State assistance in future operating costs is anticipated to leverage federal grant funding assistance for the FNSB in operating and maintaining the cemetery in the future. Future ongoing operating costs are estimated at \$250.0 GF annually. The goal is to obtain donated land for the cemetery, reducing the cost of the construction phase of this project to the estimated \$5 million.

The basic design of the Interior Alaska State Veterans Cemetery will be to provide the veterans of this area with a lasting memorial. Design goals include offering the most efficient and effective space utilization in all aspects of the design concept.

Department Priority #5

Priority Program - Outreach to Veterans and Military Families