



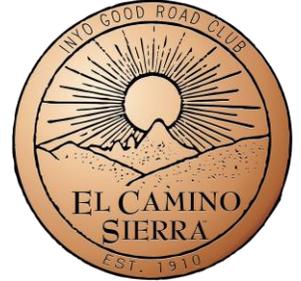
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF INYO

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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INYO COUNTY TO HOST VETERANS TOWNHALLS

As part of Inyo County's ongoing efforts to improve outreach to local veterans, the Veterans Service Office is hosting two townhalls next week with Veterans Affairs program directors discussing available mental health and social services. The program directors work in the VA's Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN). This will mark VISN's first-ever visit to Inyo County.

The townhalls are scheduled for 6 p.m. Thursday, May 12 at Lone Pine Smokehouse, 325 S. Main St., Lone Pine, and 6 p.m. Friday, May 13 at VFW Post 8988, 484 Short St., Bishop. Lone Pine Smokehouse will be providing food at the May 12 event, and Holy Smoke Texas BBQ is providing food at the May 13 townhall.

The townhalls are the result of a collaboration between the Inyo County VSO and Board of Supervisors, and organizers are especially pleased that the visits are happening during National Military Appreciation Month.

"We are forever indebted to those who served in our Nation's Armed Forces, and so it's appropriate to show our gratitude by giving back in a way that helps our veterans access the care, treatment, and benefits they deserve," said Fourth District Supervisor Jen Roeser. "These townhalls are just one more way we can live up to that obligation."

VSO Gordon Greene added that next week's events are a chance to amplify the voices of local veterans.

"I'm really looking forward to the townhall meetings," he said. "As VSO I have talked with many veterans and I've heard a lot of their concerns and ideas. I'm glad that their voices will now be heard by an agency that can take some action and get veterans the services that are so badly needed in our community."

Supervisor Roeser and VSO Greene urge all veterans to enjoy some barbecue while meeting VA program directors from VISN 22 Loma Linda. The VISN is a latticework of regional systems of care working cooperatively to better meet local healthcare needs and provide greater access to care. Its work is primarily focused on mental health and social services, especially for those veterans at risk of or experiencing substance abuse, addiction, depression, suicide, and homelessness.

Several VA program directors from VISN 22 Loma Linda will be in attendance, including:

- Rachel Bentley, LCSW – Chief of Social Work
- Caron Baylor, LCSW – Chief of Homeless Social Work
- Michael Potoczniak, Ph.D. – Acting Deputy Chief of Staff
- Sean Gilboy, Ph.D. – Victorville Vet Center Director
- Saacha Gates, Ph.D. – Antelope Valley Vet Center Director

Supervisor Roeser and VSO Greene are especially looking forward to more information on the Mobile Medical Vet Centers. "This is a great option for our rural area," she said. "We are really excited about this possibility."

Speakers will also discuss new technological options for providing treatment in rural areas.

For more information, contact VSO Gordon Greene at (760) 873-7850, or Supervisor Jennifer Roeser at (760) 878-8609.

END